



NO. 8 AUG.

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MEN OF WAR

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COMICS
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AUTHORITY

WHY IS
GRAVEDIGGER
TURNING
AGAINST
THE ALLIES?

WHO IS
HANS VON HAMMER--
THE
ENEMY
ACE?



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HANDLER OF THE DEAD:
A RATHER HUMBLE POSITION FOR
A MAN SOON TO BECOME LEGEND.
BUT THEN, NO ONE EVER SAID THAT
WAR IS LONG ON LOGIC.
JUST ASK ULYSSES HAZARD,
A MAN WHO HAD TO FIGHT NOT
ONLY THE ENEMY--BUT HIS
OWN COUNTRY--TO EARN THE...

CODE NAME:

Gravedigger

THE DARK, OIL-SLICKED
WATERS OF THE THAMES
ARE COLD THIS NIGHT...

ROGER MCKENZIE • SCRIPT
DICK AYERS AND
ROMEO TANGHAL • ART
SHELLY LEFERMAN • LETTERING
JERRY SERPE • COLORING
PAUL LEVITZ • EDITOR

...COLD,
AND
FILLED
WITH
DEATH...

DEATH-STROKE

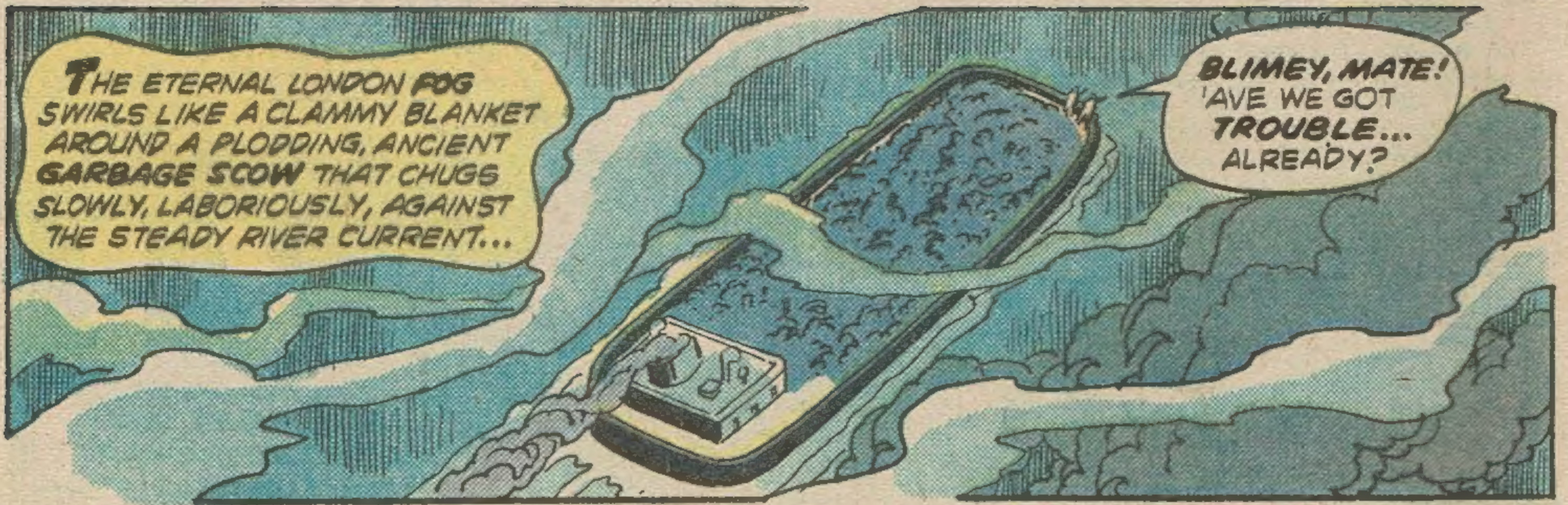
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THE ETERNAL LONDON FOG SWIRLS LIKE A CLAMMY BLANKET AROUND A PLODDING, ANCIENT GARBAGE SCOW THAT CHUGS SLOWLY, LABORIOUSLY, AGAINST THE STEADY RIVER CURRENT...

BLIMEY, MATE!
'AVE WE GOT TROUBLE...
ALREADY?



IT IS A NON-DESCRIPT, BARELY SEA-WORTHY VESSEL --TO ALL APPEARANCES HARDLY DIFFERENT THAN ANY OF A HUNDRED SUCH SHIPS WHICH MAKE THE SAME TRIP DAILY...

...EXCEPT,
OF COURSE,
FOR THE
SOLDIERS...

I'M NOT SURE, MATE, BUT I'M
NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES.
THOUGHT I SAW
SOMETHING!



GUESS IT'S JUST
MY BLINKING NERVES,
THOUGH.

AYE, WE'RE
ALL BLOODY
NERVOUS,
MATE...



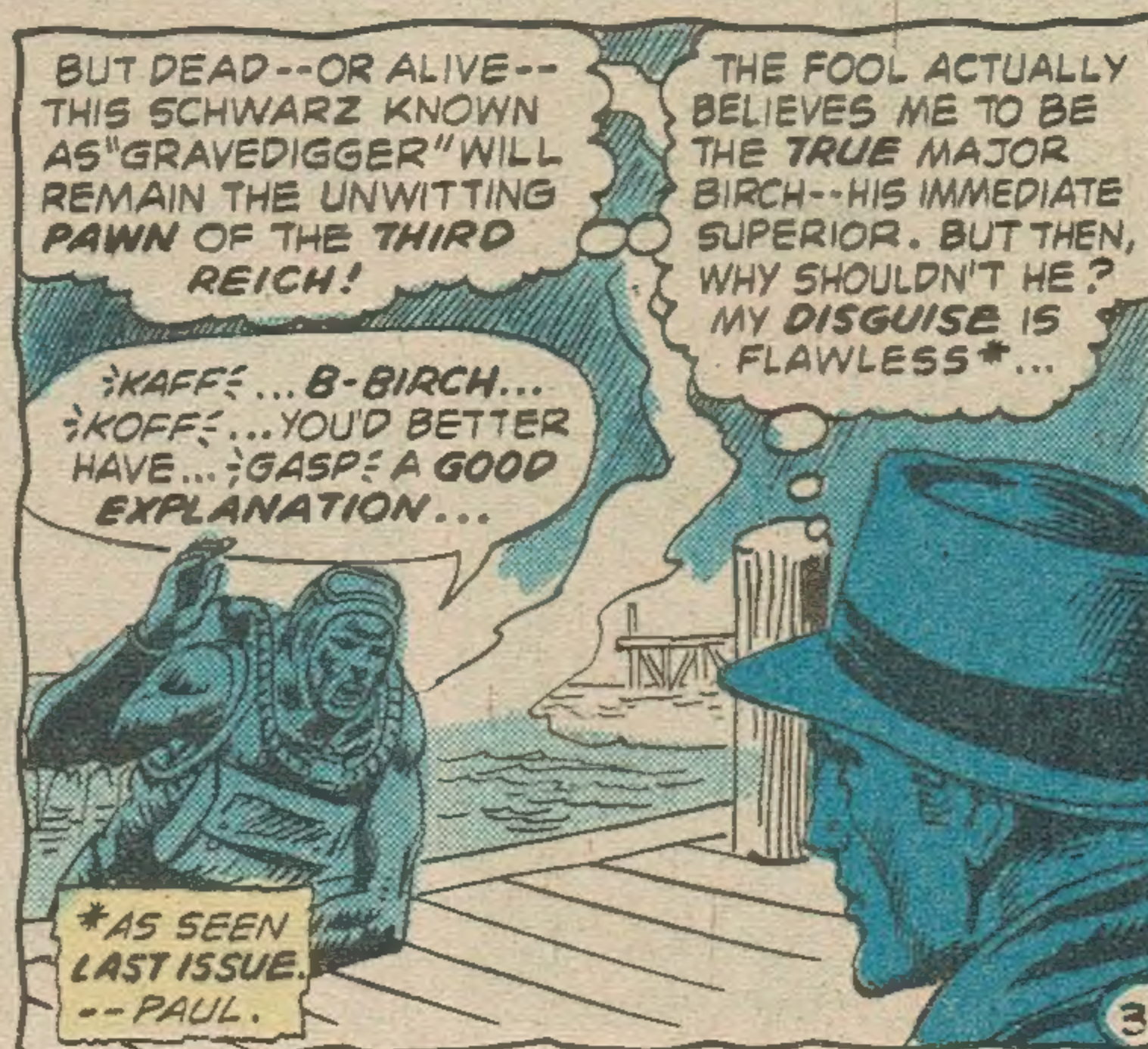
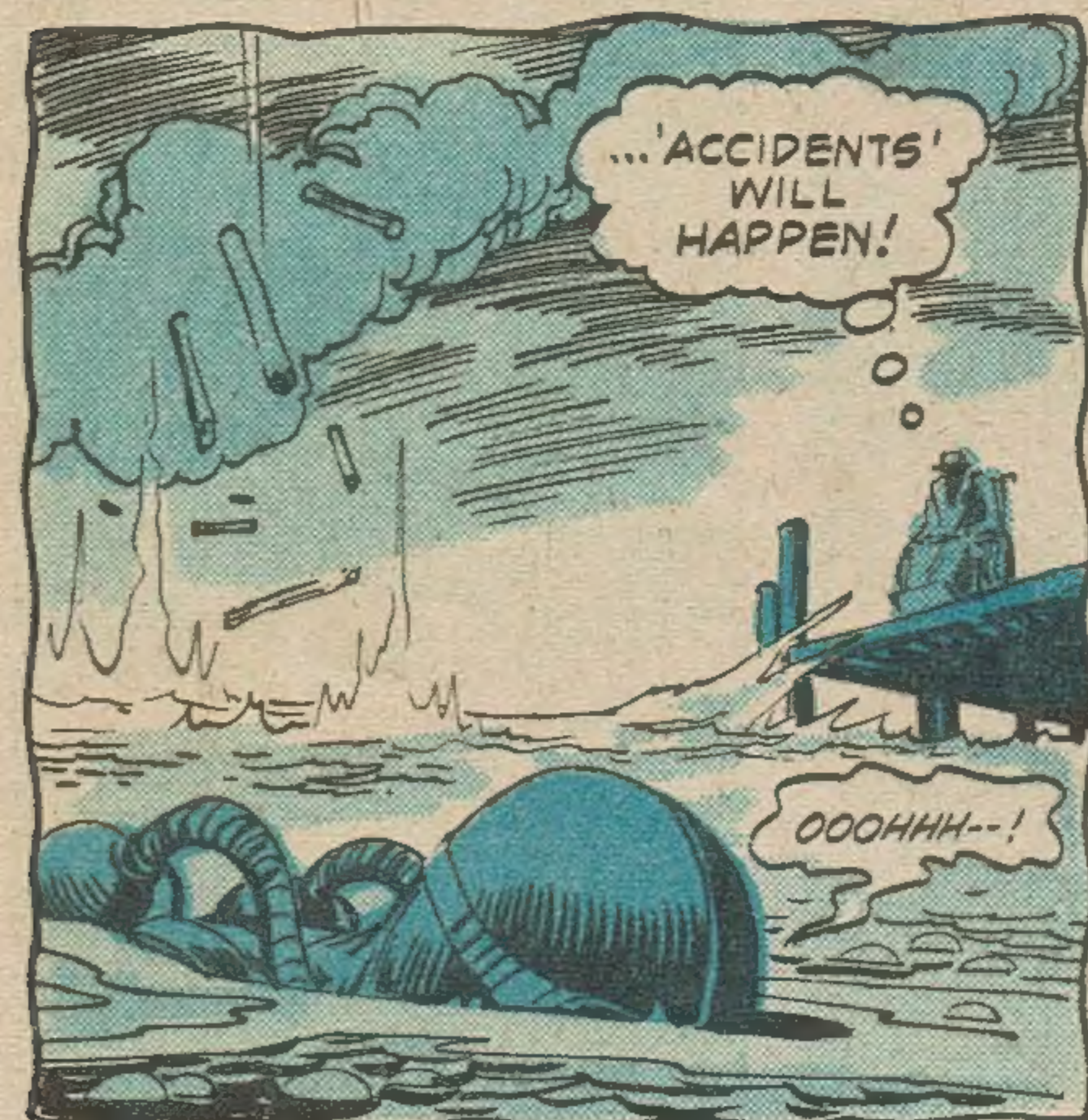
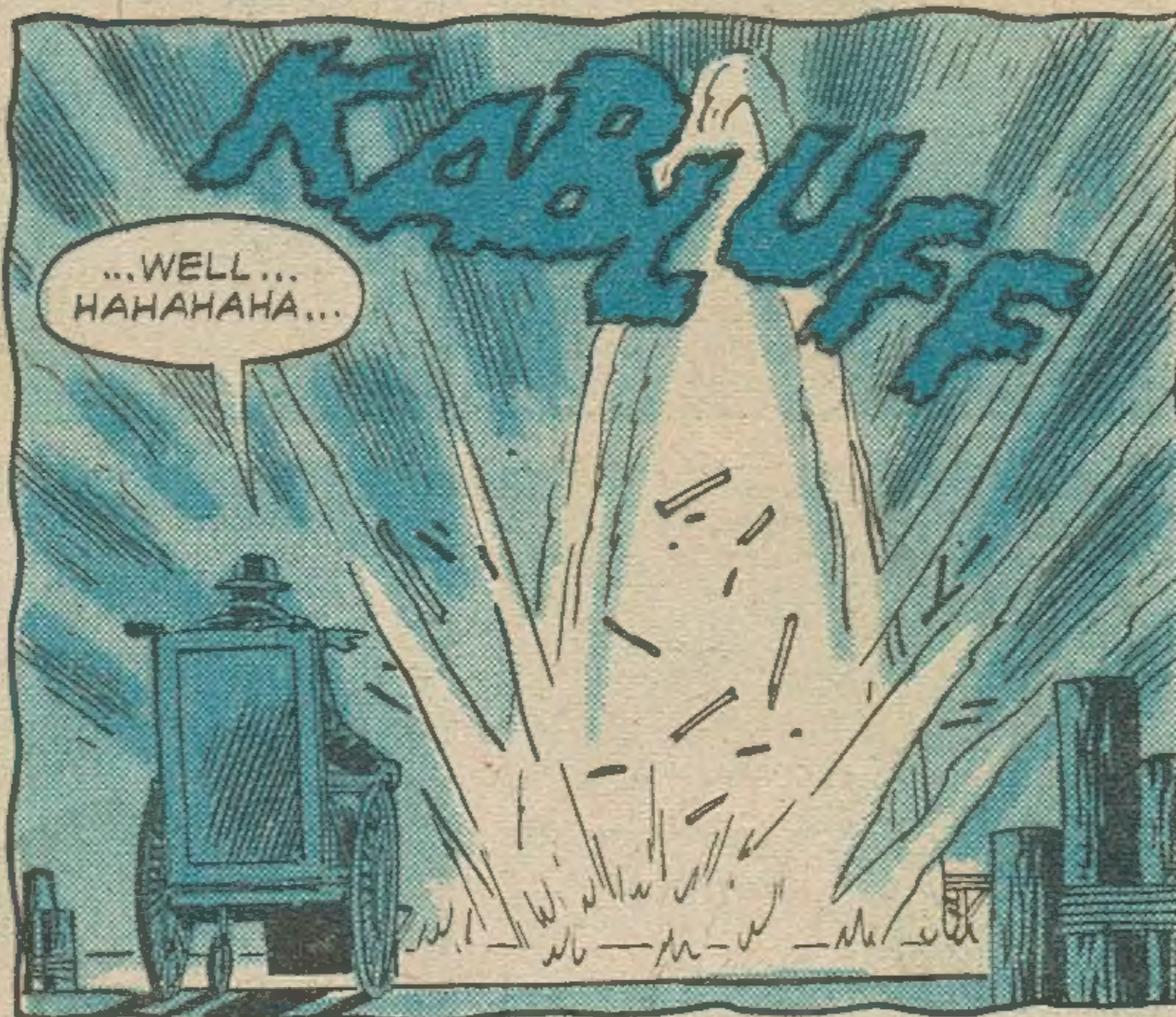
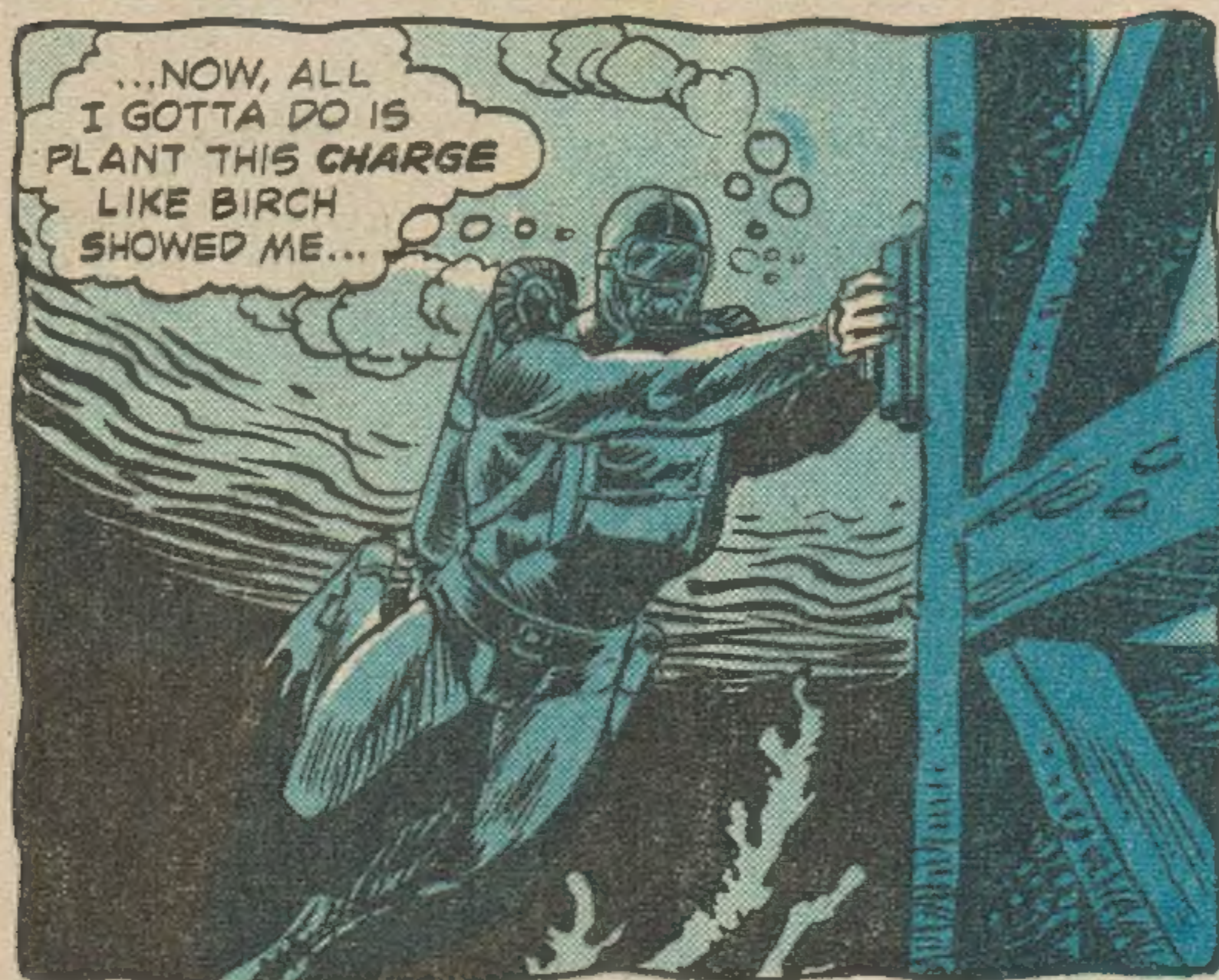
...THIS BLEEPIN'
MISSION'S GOT US
ALL ON EDGE. AND I
DON'T MIND SAYIN'
THAT I DON'T LIKE
IT ONE BLOODY BIT!

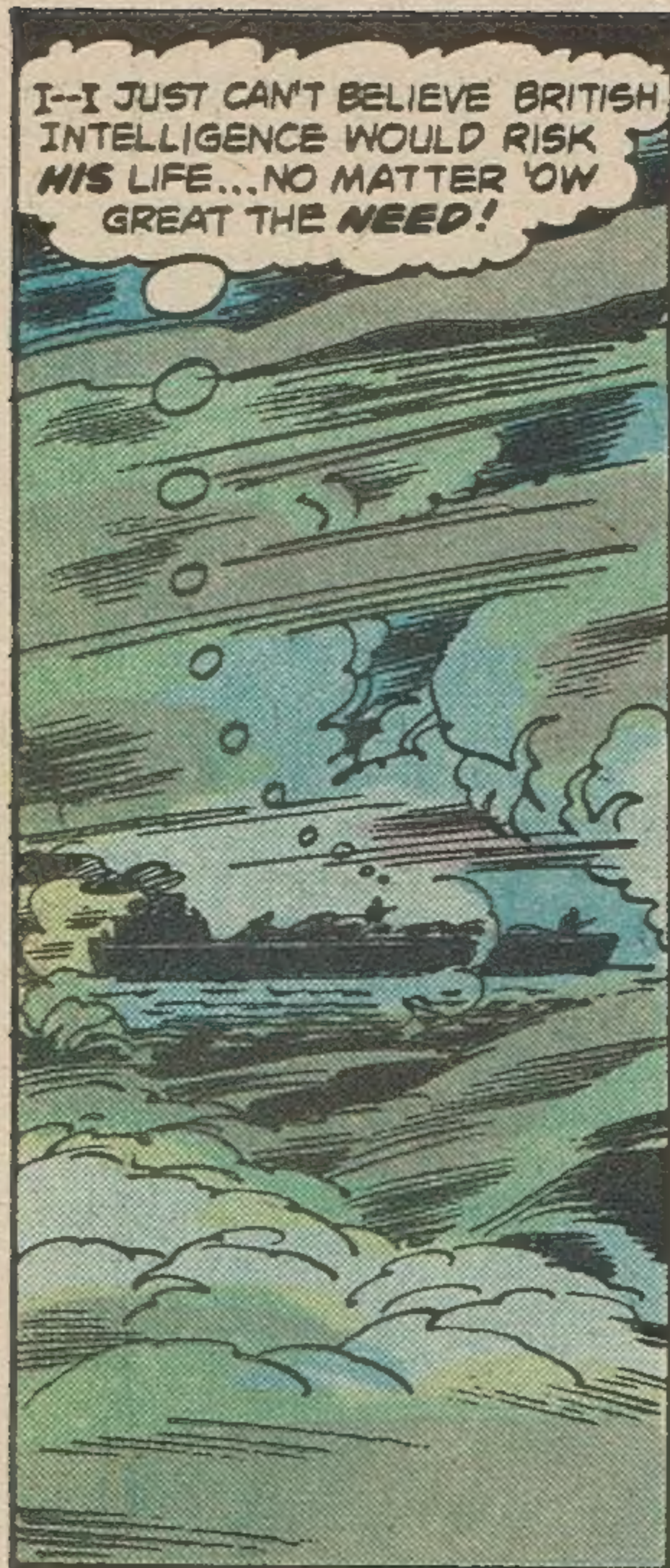


AYE! I'LL REST
EASIER ONCE THE
OLD MAN'S SAFE...

...I JUST 'OPE
NOTHING GOES
WRONG. ENGLAND
COULD ILL-AFFORD
TO LOSE 'IM...

FLASHBACK I--TWO WEEKS AGO





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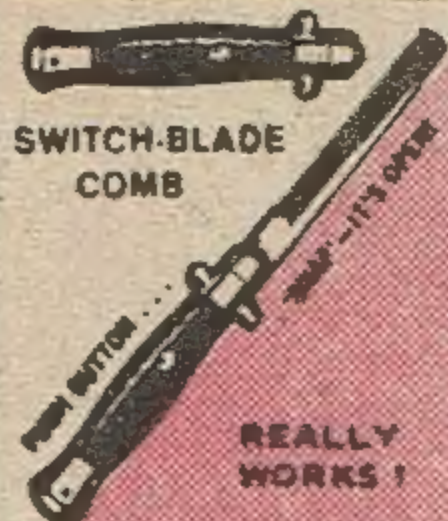
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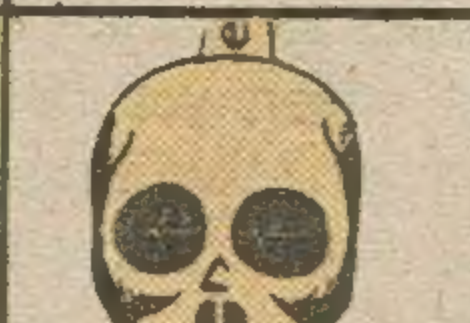
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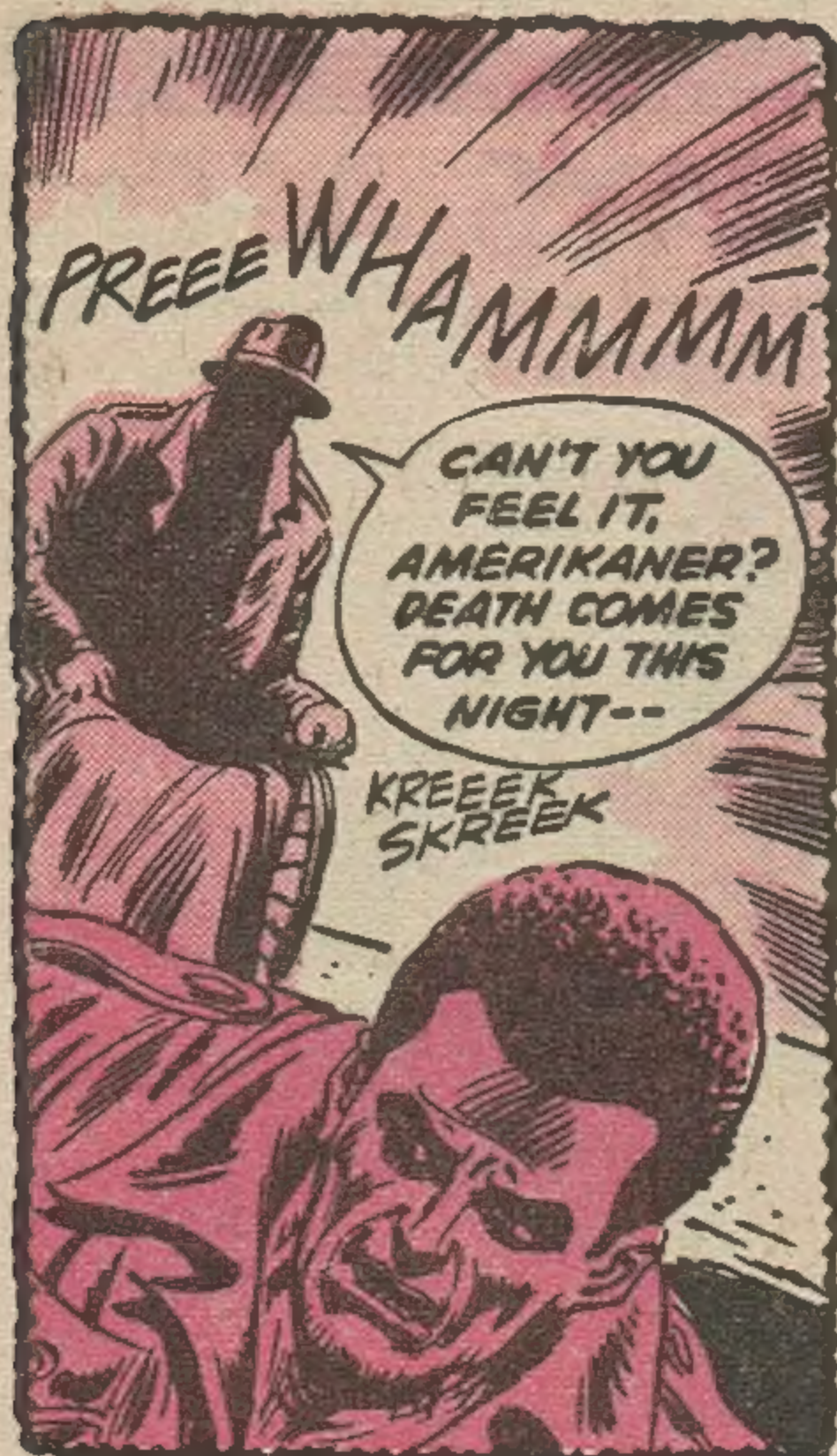
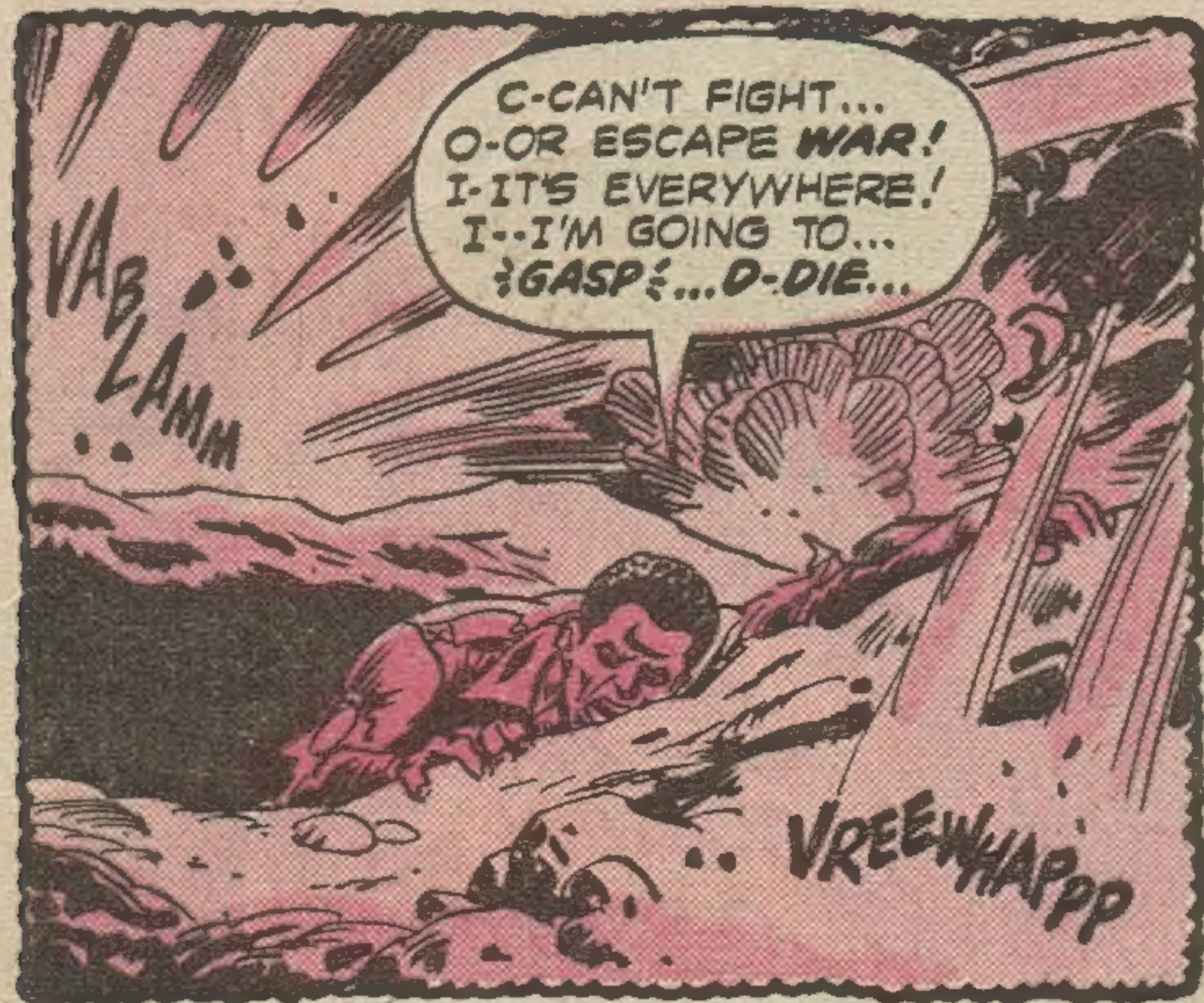
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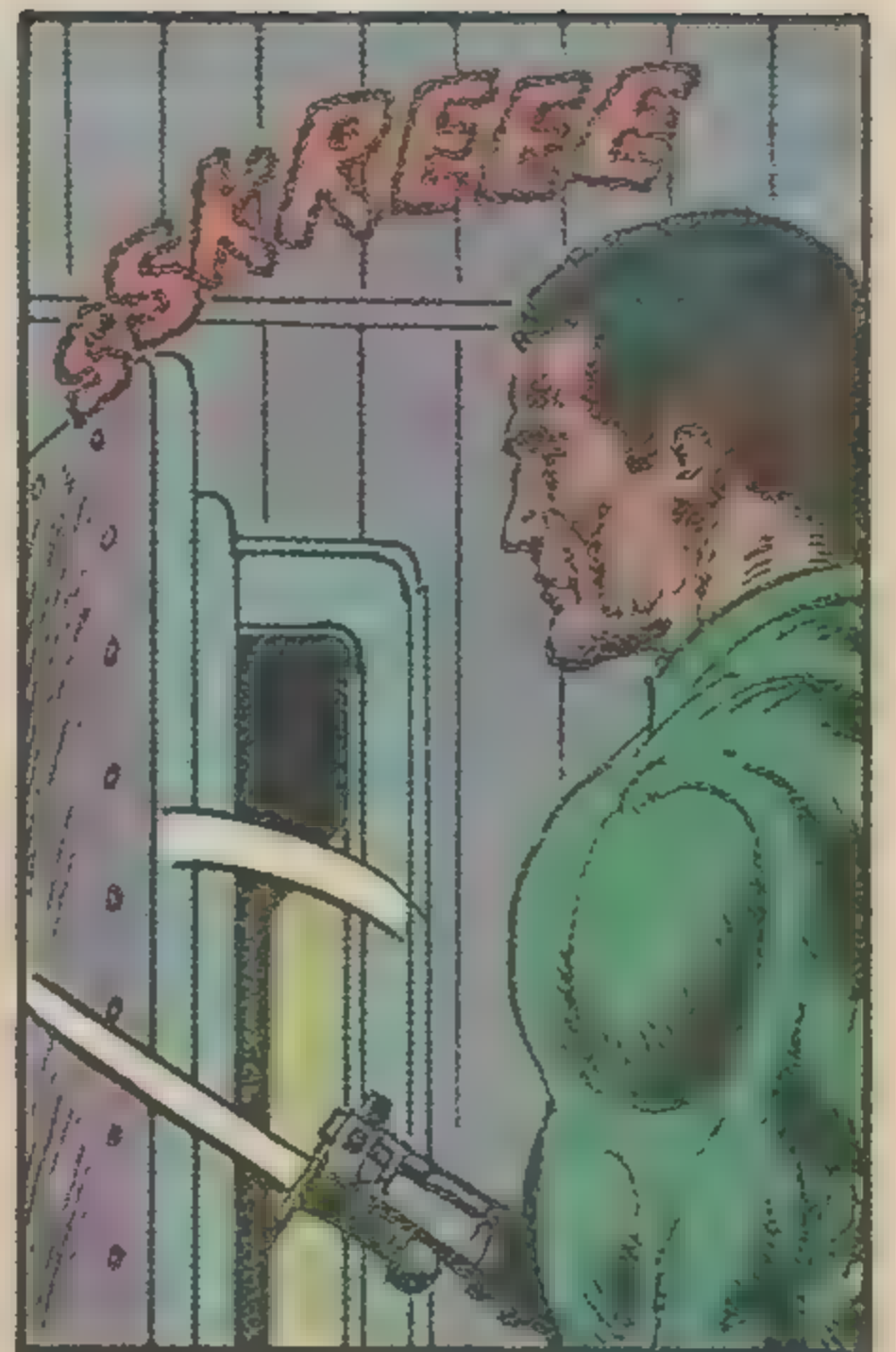
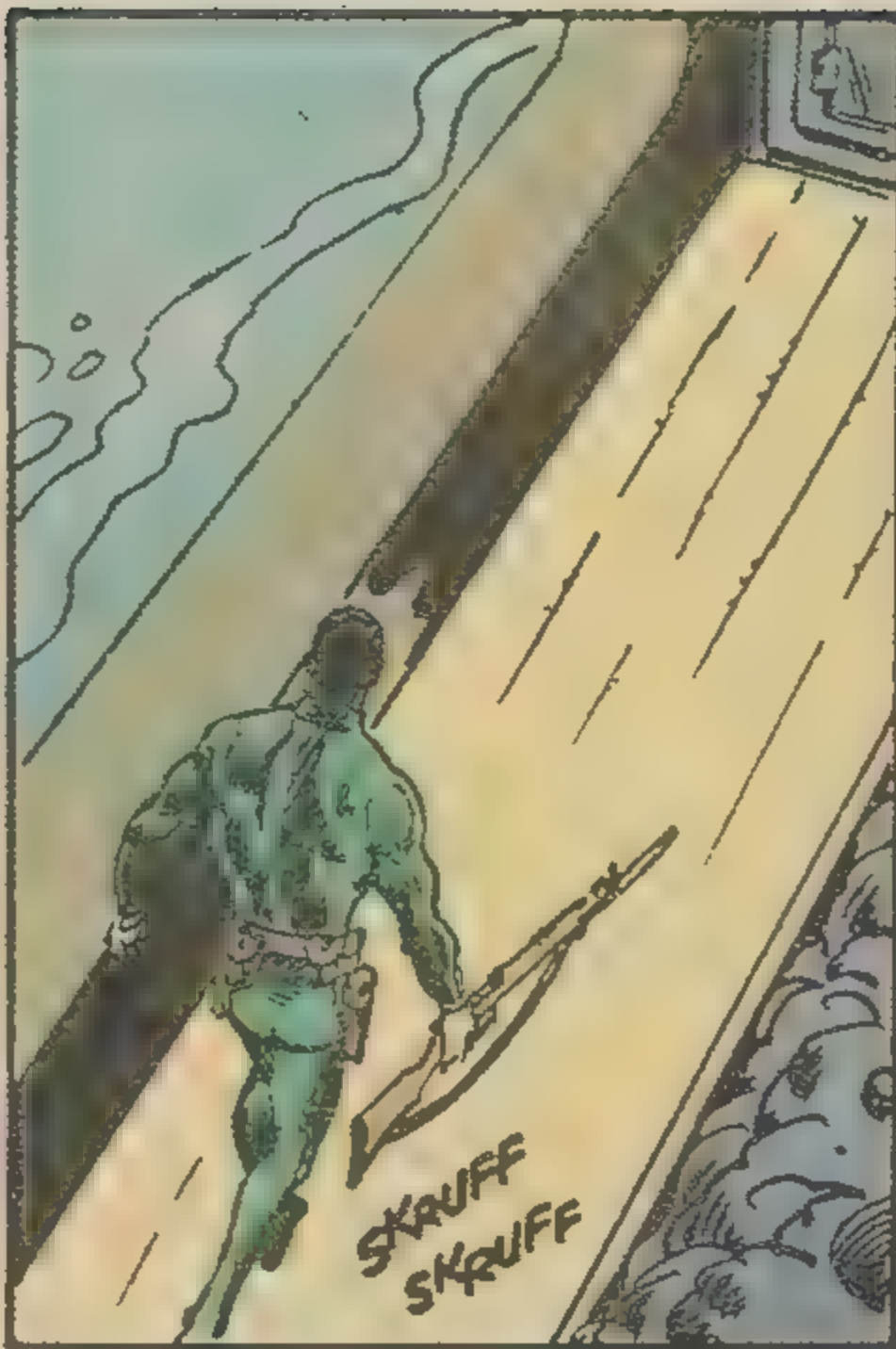
FLASHBACK II--NINE DAYS AGO



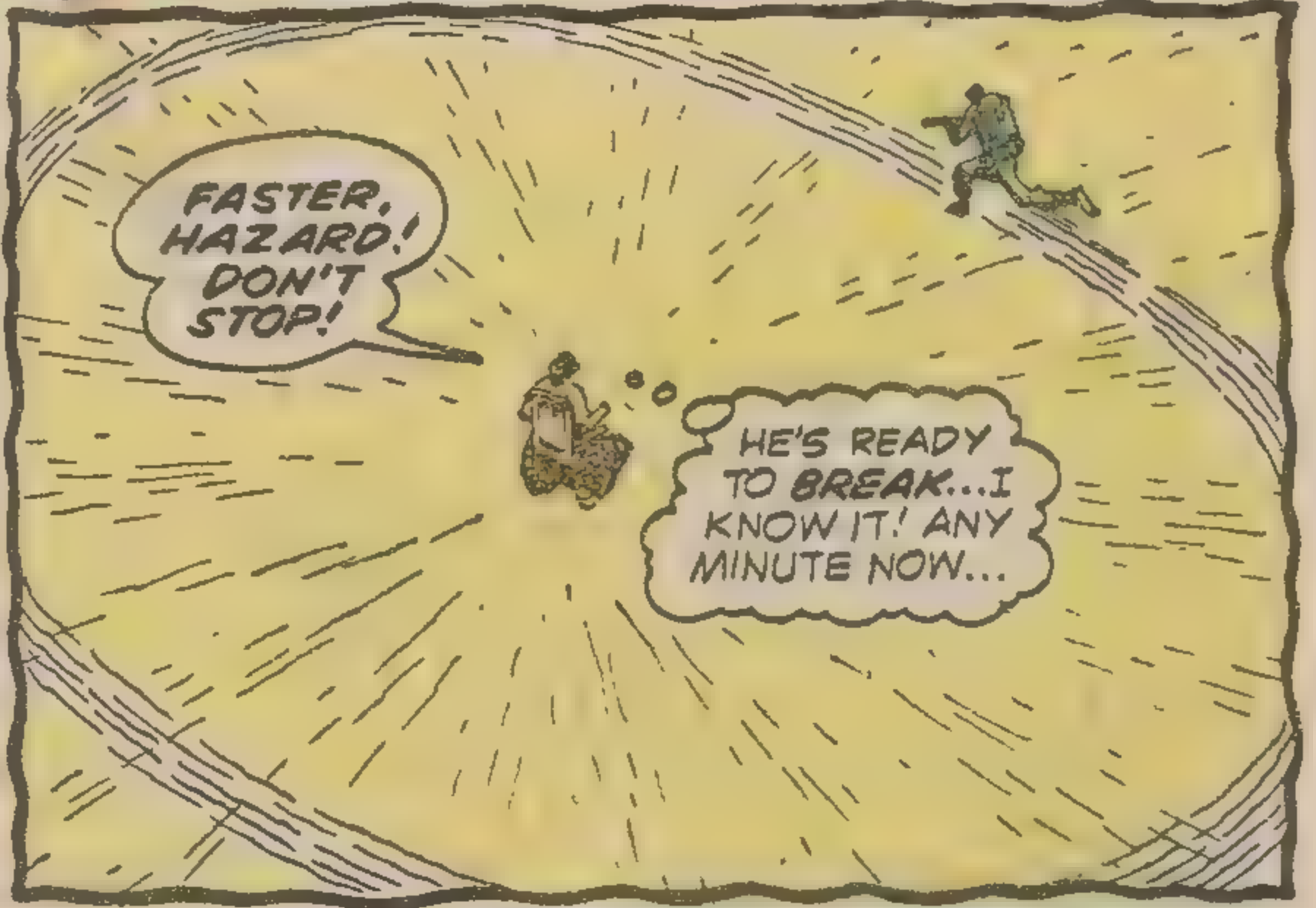
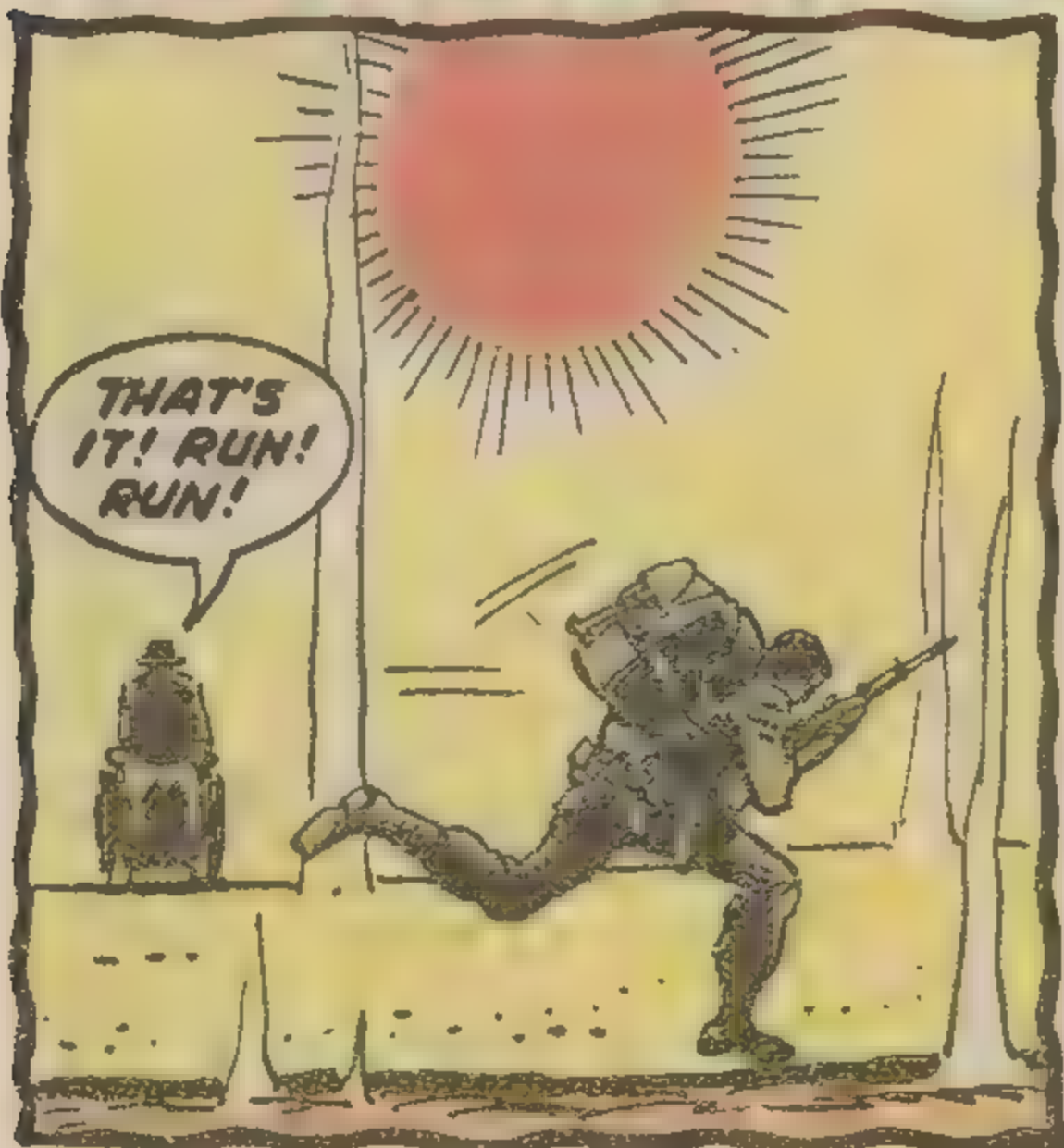


FLASHBACK III--FIVE DAYS AGO





FLASHBACK IV -- TWO DAYS AGO

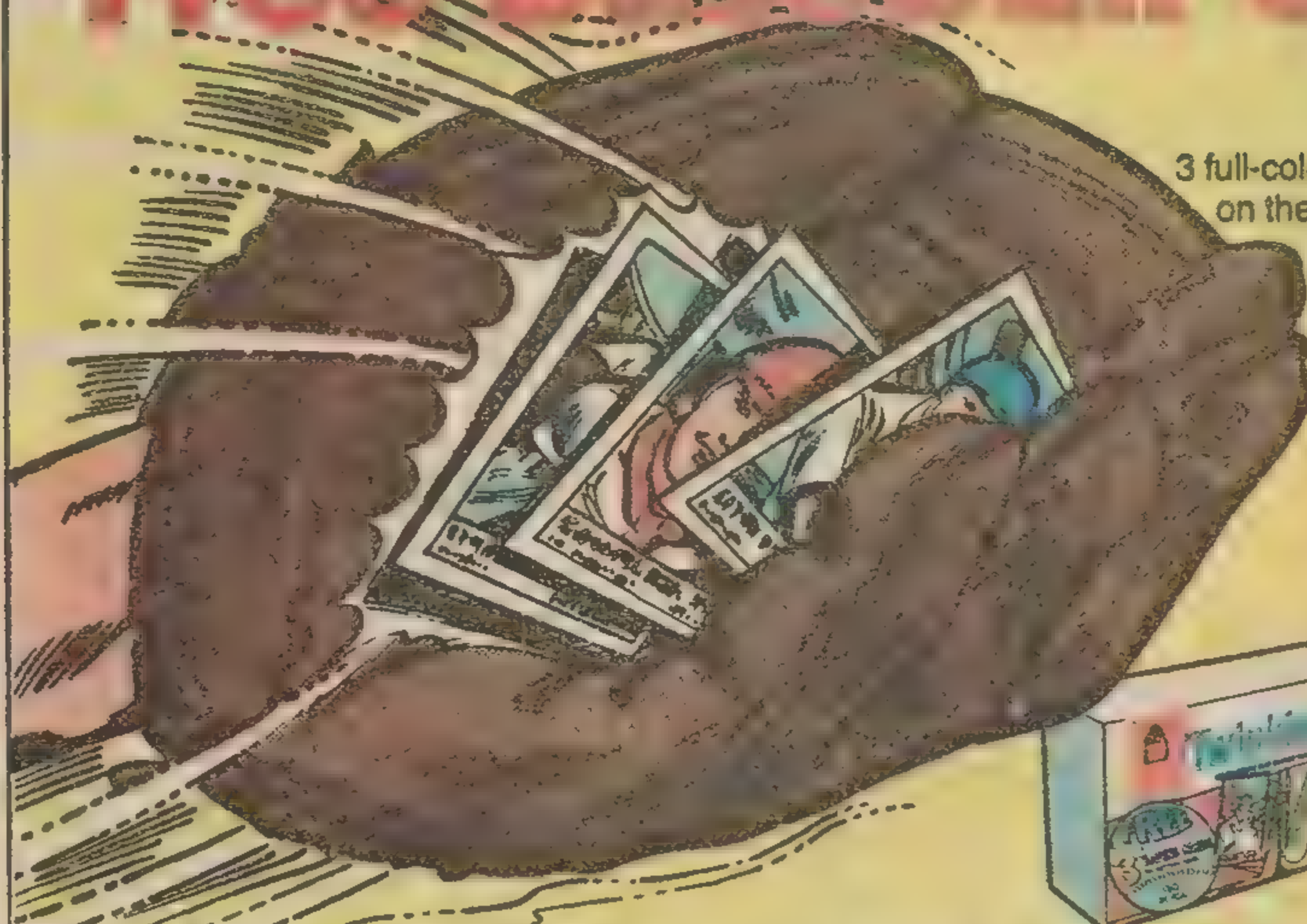


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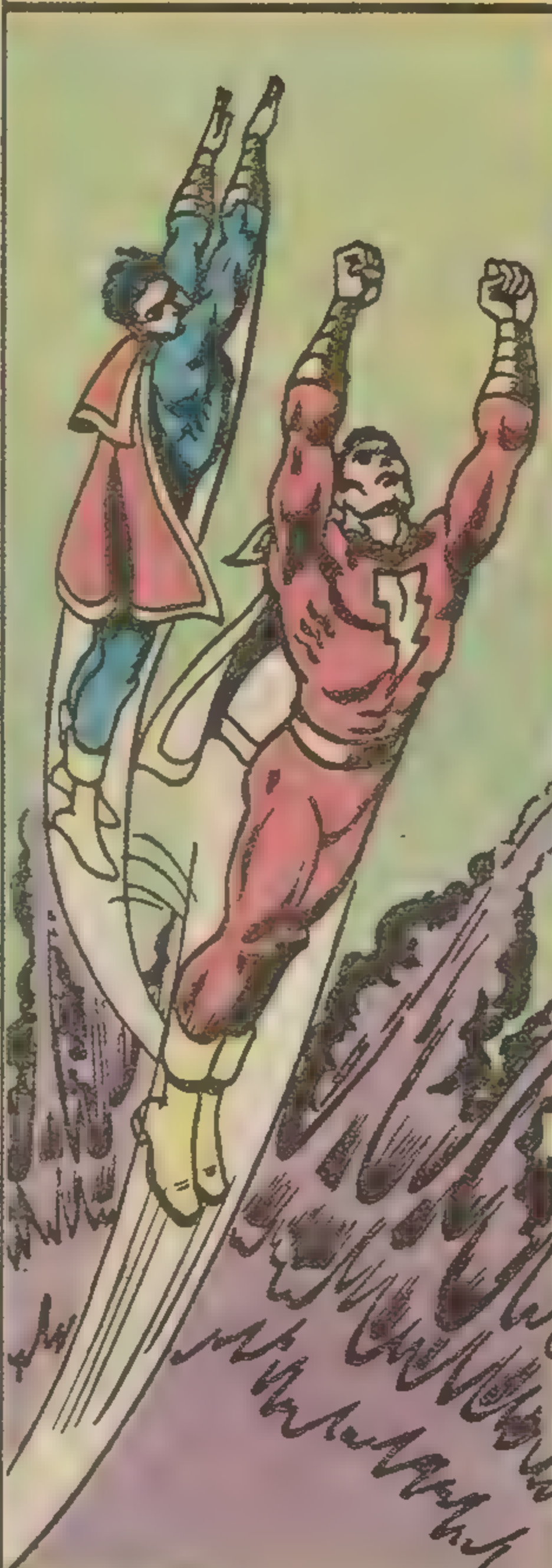
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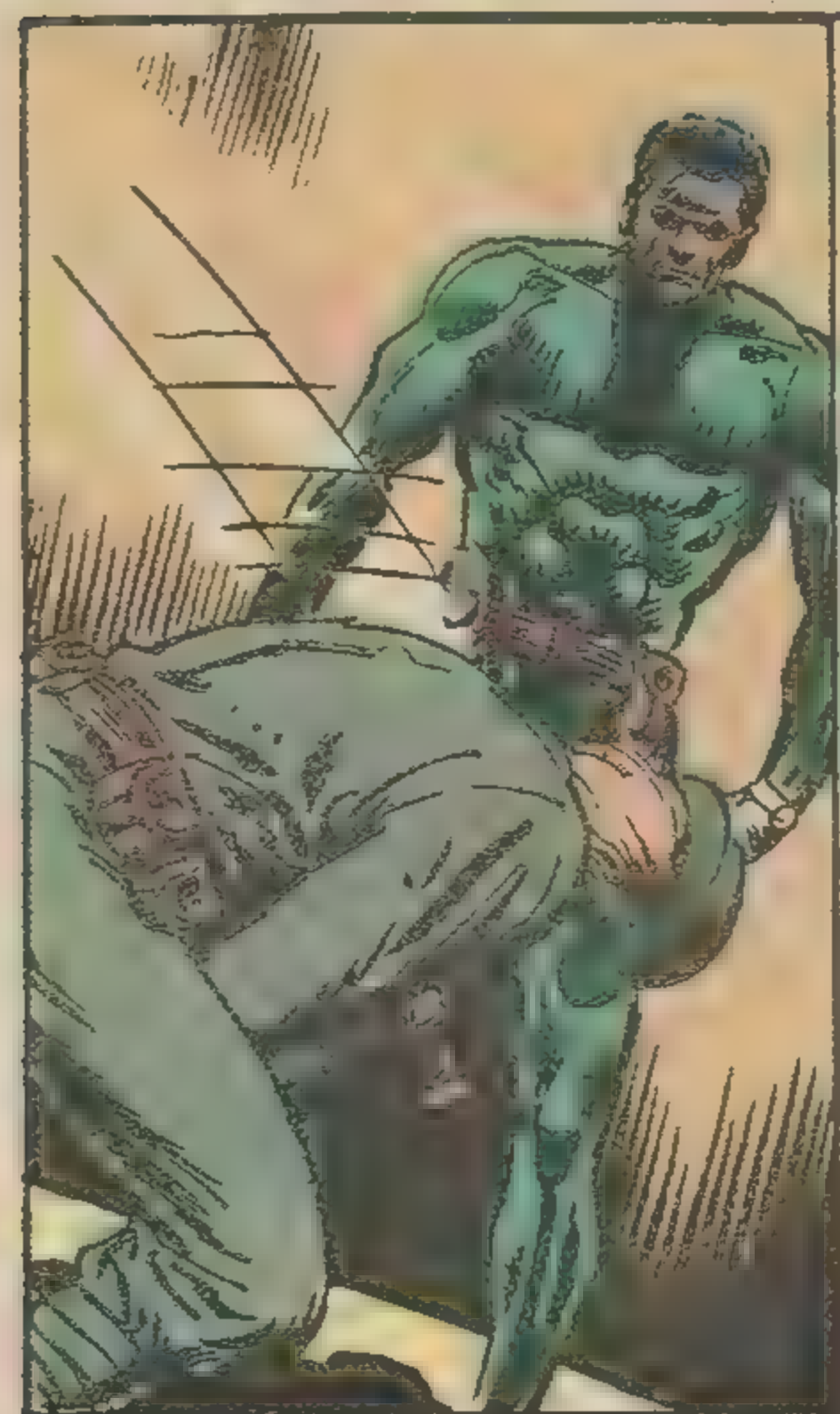
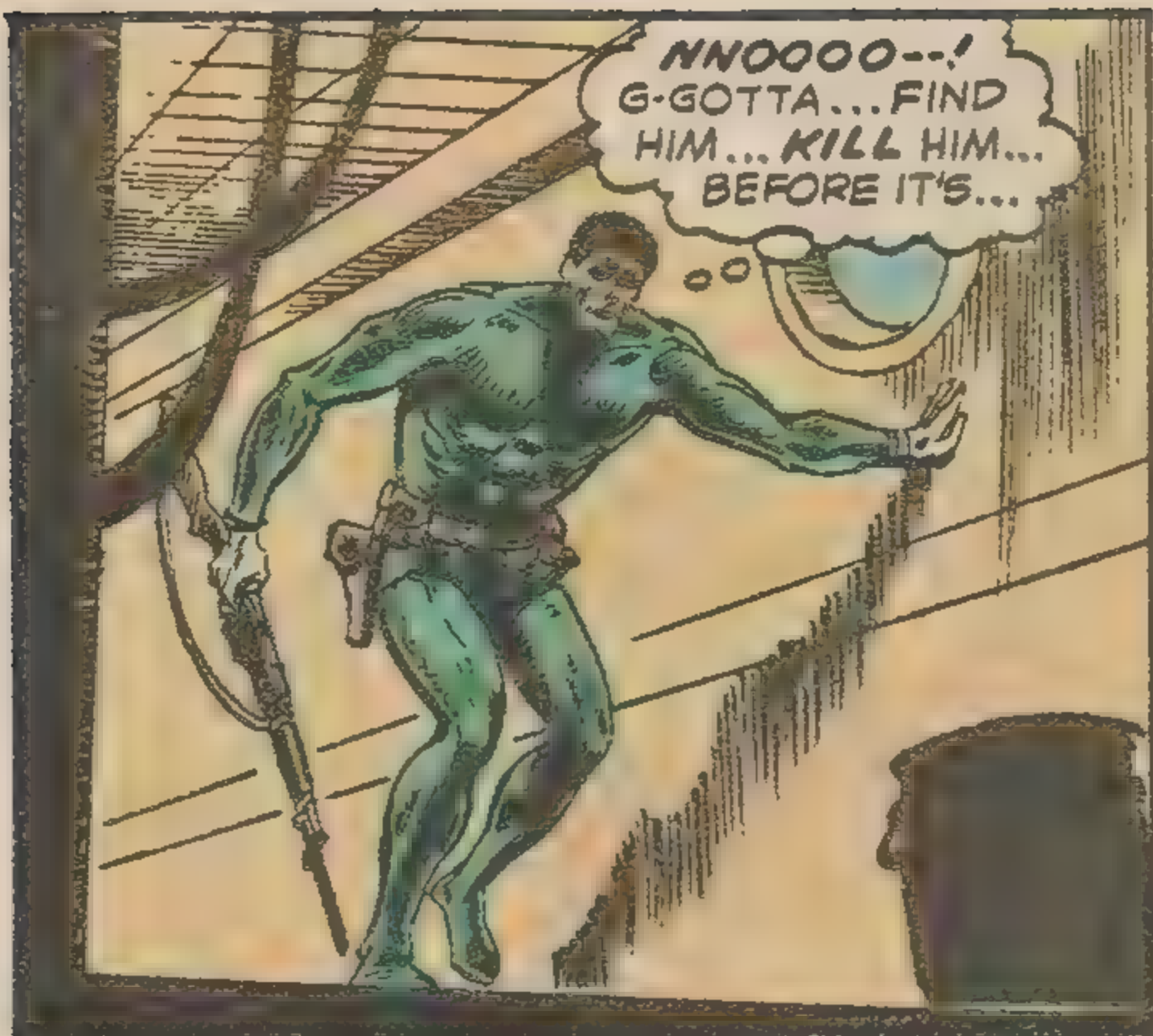
The **HUMAN
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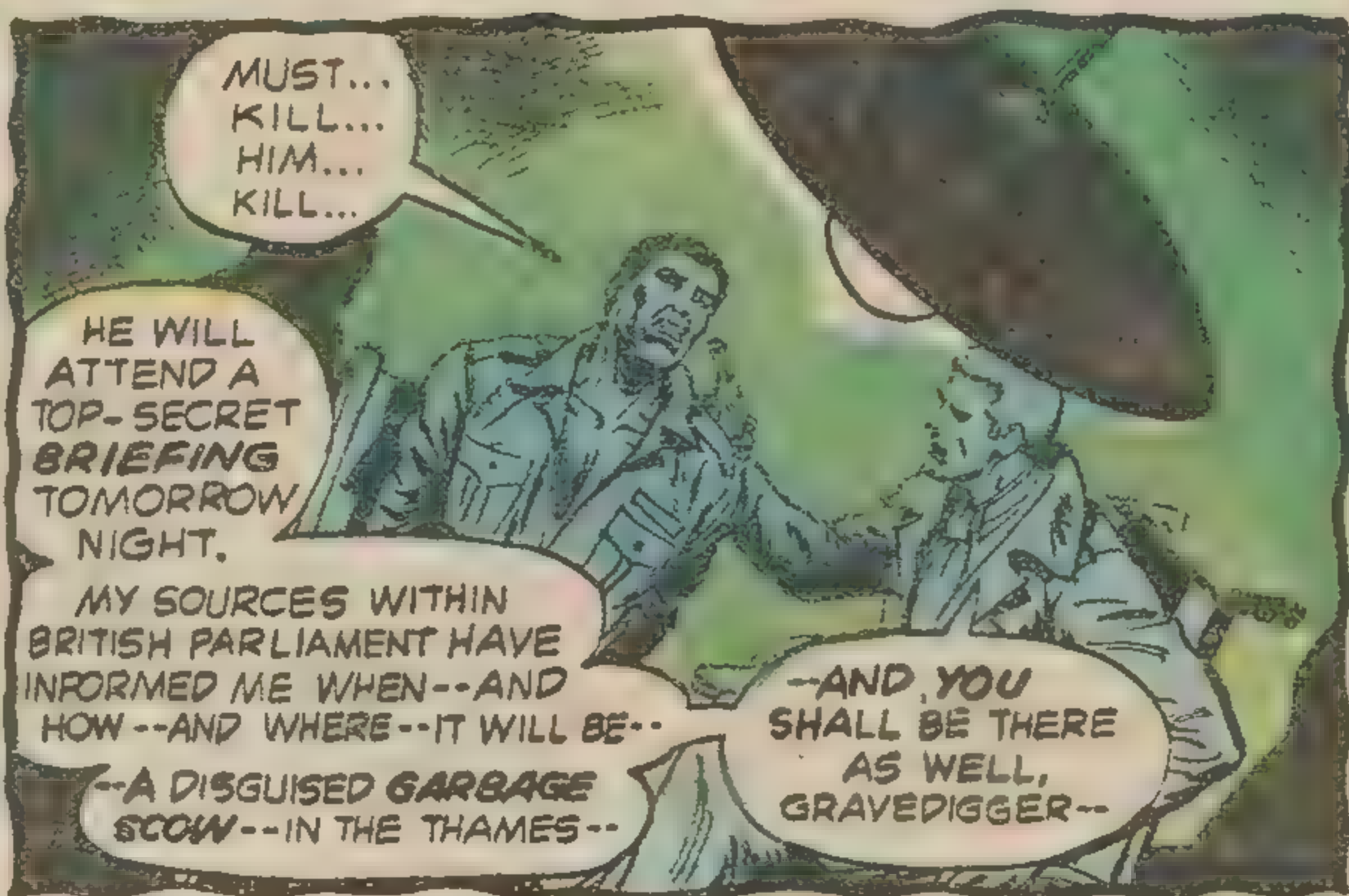


RETURNS TO ACTION IN
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and the BOLD**

THE EXPLOSION!



FLASHBACK II -- YESTERDAY



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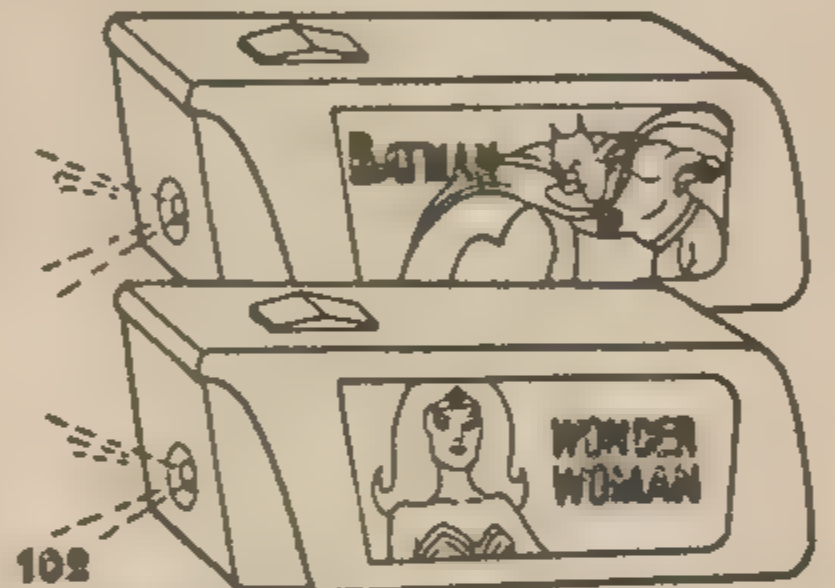
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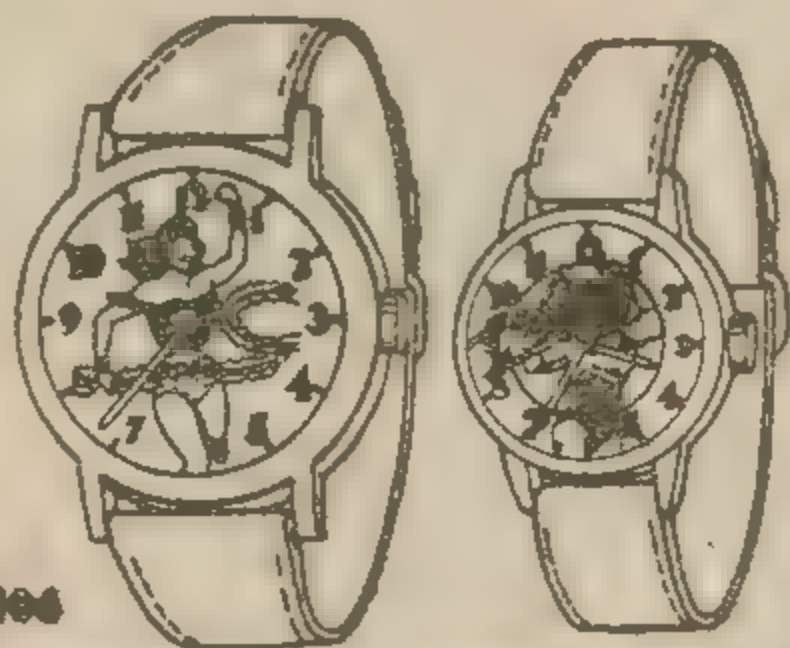
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1. To enter, type or print clearly your name, address and zip code on this official entry blank, or on a plain piece of 3" x 5" paper. You can enter as many times as you want, but each entry must be mailed separately.
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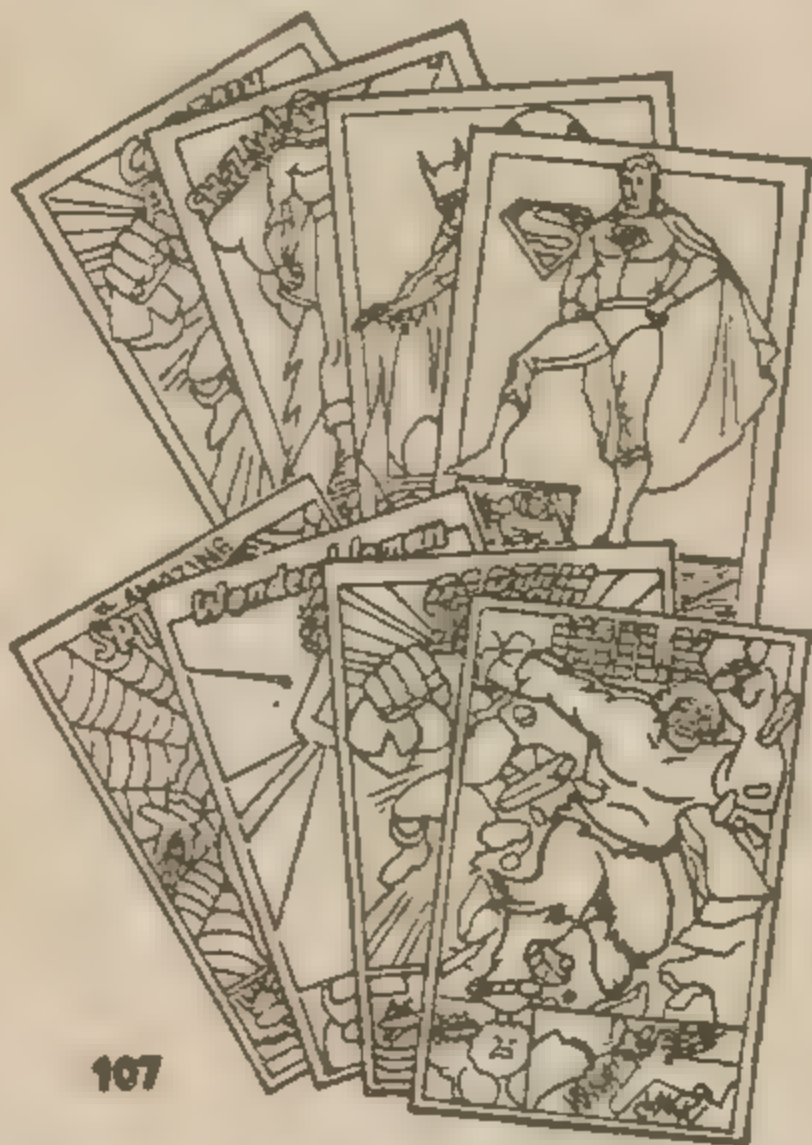
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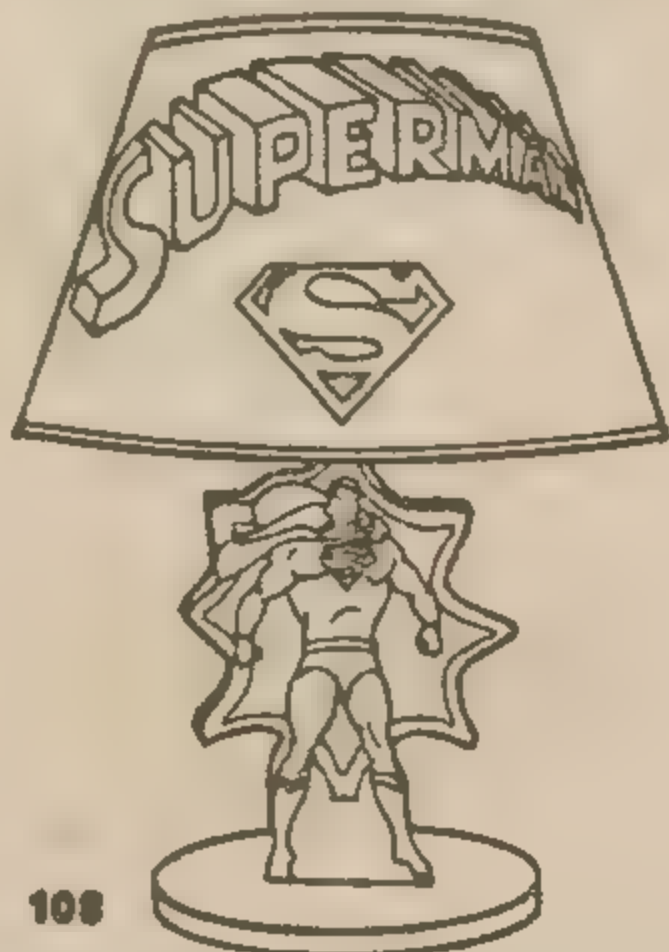
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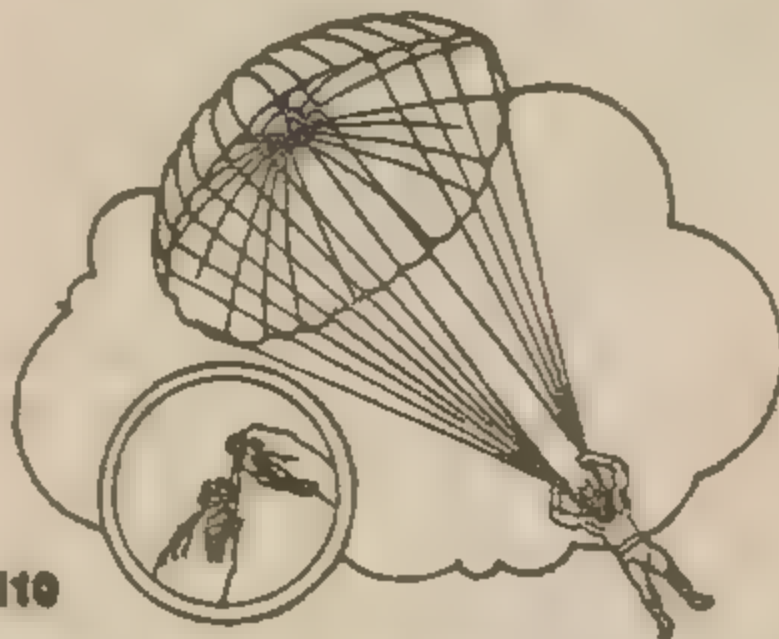
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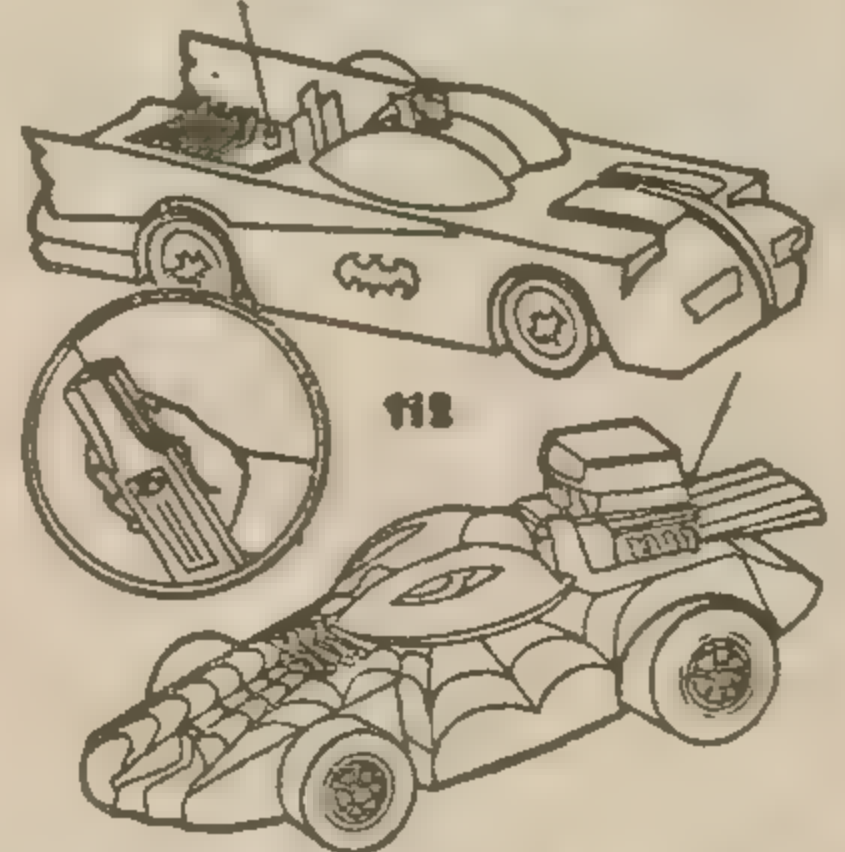
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TOTALS				

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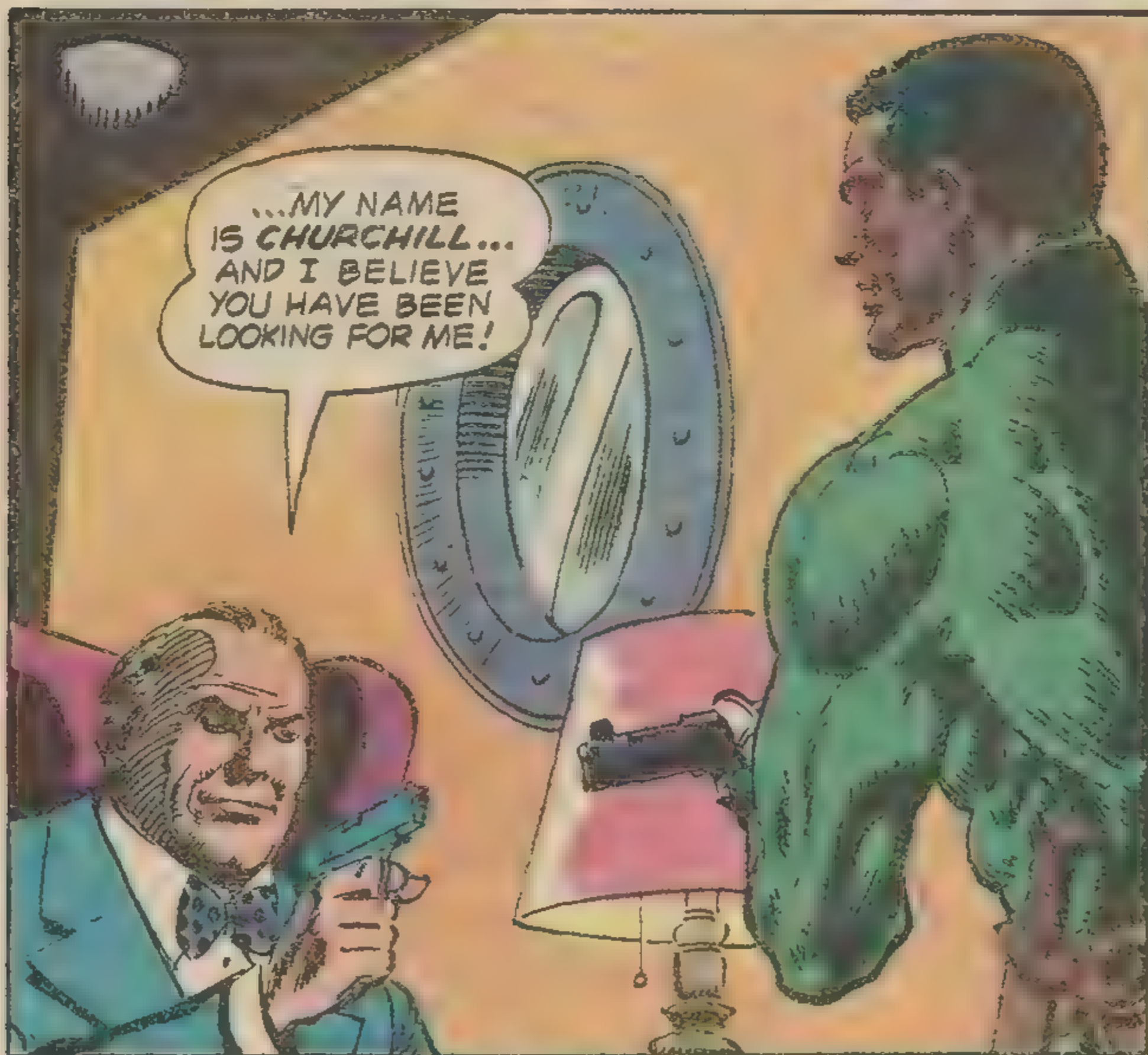
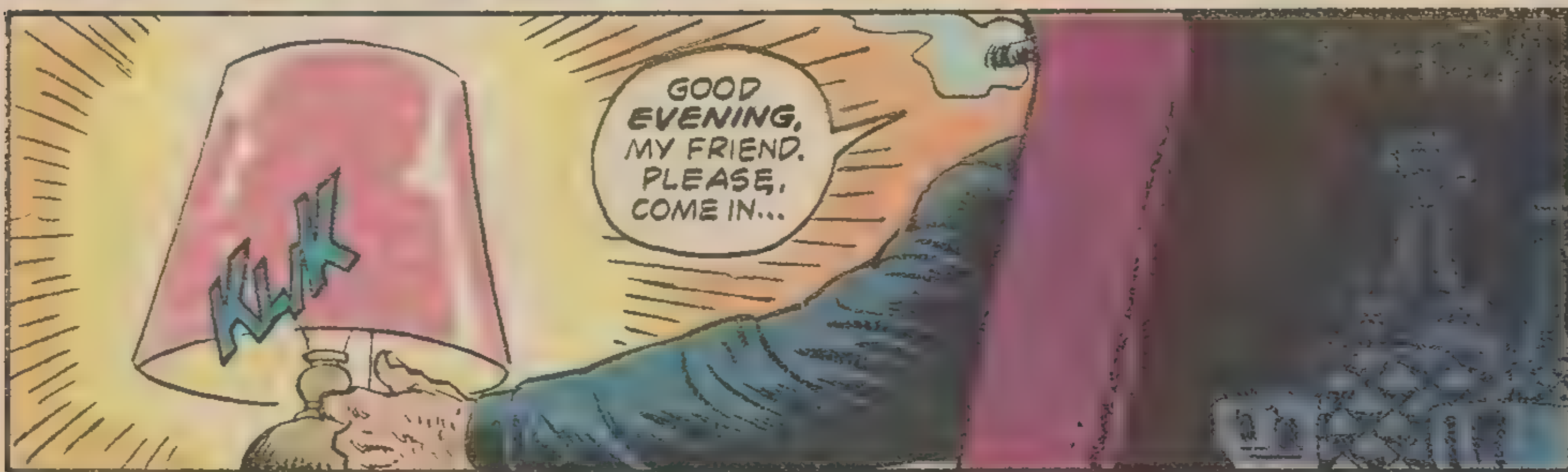
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**NEXT
ISSUE:** } **Gravedigger...R.I.P.**
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Dear Readers,

I'd like to take advantage of the fact that there's no mail in my **MEN OF WAR** file (no . . . it's not your fault; blame our strange seven-times-a-year publishing schedule) to turn the tables on you. Specifically, to use this column to depart from the editorial "we" and give you an idea of what **MEN OF WAR** is all about. And, in fact, there's no better time to do that than this month.

You're cordially invited to follow **MEN OF WAR** in a new format next month, when along with the rest of DC's magazines, we move up to a thicker size with 25 pages of new stories and art, plus the all important letter column (naturally). Each issue of **MEN OF WAR** will feature three stories, each part of an ongoing series (although those series may alternate occasionally). **Code Name: Gravedigger** by Roger McKenzie, Dick Ayers and Romeo Tanghal will remain lead feature (and the longest story in the issue), but both **Enemy Ace** by Bob Kanigher and Howie Chaykin and **Dateline: Frontline** by Cary Burkett and Jerry Grandinetti will have full-length features of their own.

Naturally, the price of the magazine will have to go up to deliver this much more material to you. But for the first time in recent history, a comic book publisher won't be asking you to pay more for less; the price per page of story content will actually be going down fractionally. The feeling around the DC offices is that this may be most exciting step in comics history, and I hope that the loyal following of **MEN OF WAR** will be a part of it.

Enough of the future. Let's take a look at the present, and use the rest of this page to take you behind the scenes, for a look at the who, how and why of **MEN OF WAR**.

Beginning in reverse order, the why, of course, is to provide entertainment, and that process begins when I write this column. Because it's the reading of your letters (as well as a careful glance at sales figures) that suggest to me what balance of stories to plan for upcoming issues. This issue's **Enemy Ace** story, exploring his family background and origins, was suggested by a reader in an earlier lettercolumn, and passed on to writer Bob Kanigher in a plot conference—the next step in the how.

After planning the balance, I sit with each writer and discuss the direction of their next cycle of stories. Inspiration strikes at strange moments, so the ideas are as likely to flash across a poker table as an editorial desk, but somehow we work it out.

Then each of the writers, Roger McKenzie, Bob Kanigher and Cary Burkett, go back and plot out the story or stories; returning for a more detailed plot dis-

cussion, then scripting a manuscript that resembles a screenplay.

The scripts are then edited, and passed out to the artist assigned to the respective series. Howie Chaykin (who takes over **Enemy Ace** next issue from able pinch-hitters Larry Hama and Bob Smith) and Jerry Grandinetti do the complete art job themselves, so they turn in very rough layouts for the letterer to work his magic on, then finish up the art in ink. Dick Ayers only lays out **Gravedigger**, so he works more tightly, making sure that Romeo Tanghal has all the drawing information he needs for the final rendering. In between their efforts, of course, the letterer again does his work.

With the completed book before me, I search out cover ideas, and develop a final scheme with Joe Kubert; which he then illustrates—and voila! The issue is on its way to the printer, via our production department and colorists.

If that seems simple, it is. But the reason why it works so well, I think, is the peculiar balance of the who behind **MEN OF WAR**. Unlike most of today's comics, which tend to be staffed by either the veterans of the industry, or the green apples, **MEN OF WAR** teams both to the advantage of both.

Bob Kanigher and Joe Kubert practically created the war comics genre, and served as the first two editors of the DC war line—supervising an average of five combat titles for over twenty years between them. And Bob, of course, is also the writer/creator of most of our battle stars. Jerry Grandinetti also began working on DC's war comics in the fifties, but he never worked on any one feature long enough for his name to become associated with it—as opposed to Dick Ayers, who made his rep by working on **SGT. FURY** from its first issue until its last new story with only occasional interruptions.

On the other side of the fence, raw replacements bring a special enthusiasm to **MEN OF WAR**. This was the first series assignment for both Roger McKenzie and Cary Burkett, and the first new title to come from my editorial office. And the artistic energy that Romeo Tanghal, Larry Hama, Bob Smith, and Howie Chaykin display is self-evident.

In closing, I'd just like to mention those of the "who" behind **MEN OF WAR** that have so far gone unlauded. First of all, the team that helped create **Gravedigger**—original writer David Michelinie and penciller Ed Davis. And finally, the people who make this magazine possible and worthwhile—you, the readers; the people who have supported **MEN OF WAR** since its inception. Thanks.

—Paul Levitz, Editor

WRITE RIGHT NOW!

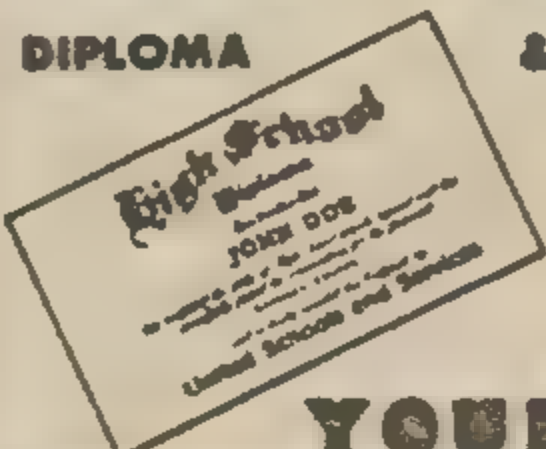
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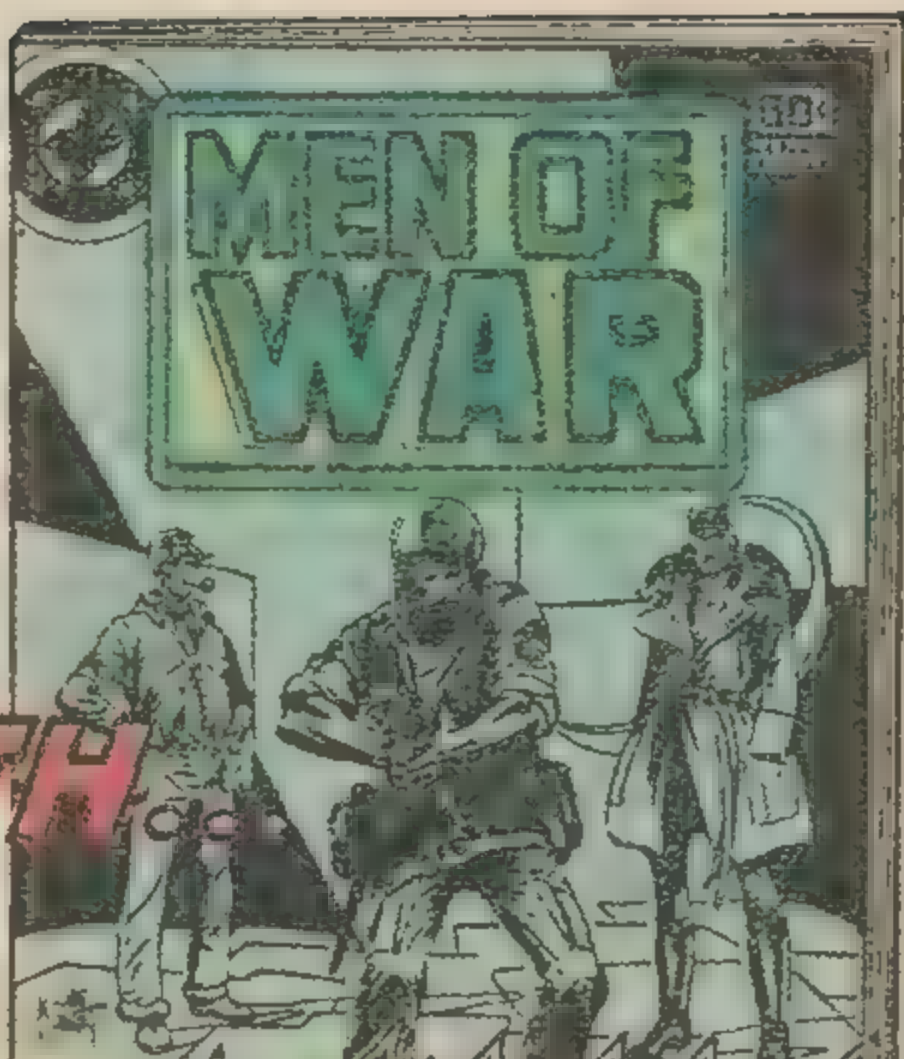
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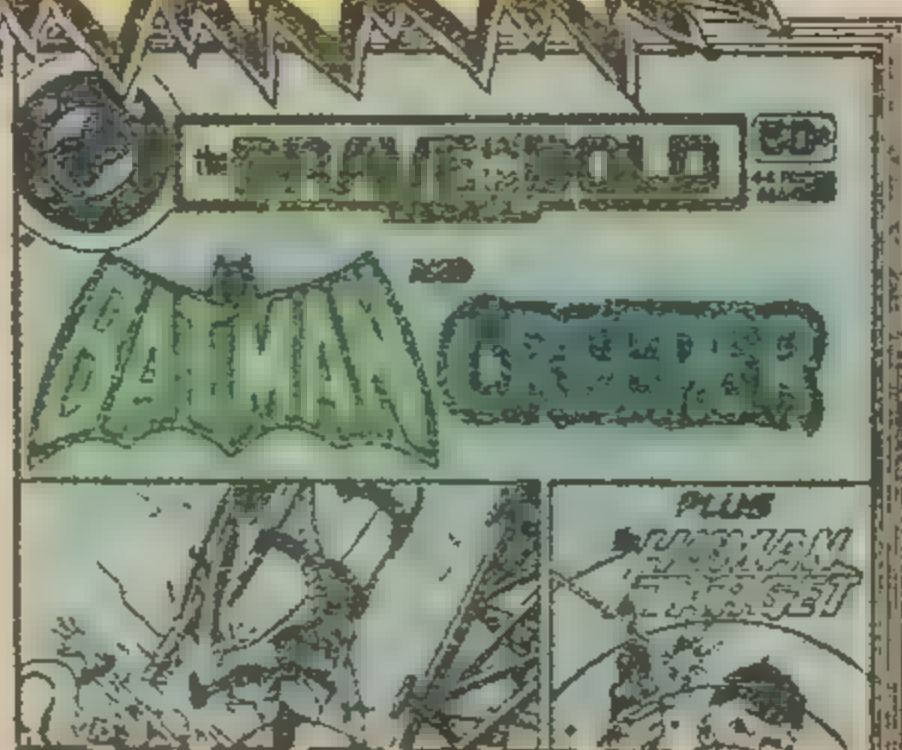
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Dear Hans, April 7, 1917
Your father is dying... Come to the castle at once... if you wish to see him before his eyes close forever!
Van Himmer
Jagdstaffel 17
Lusitanien

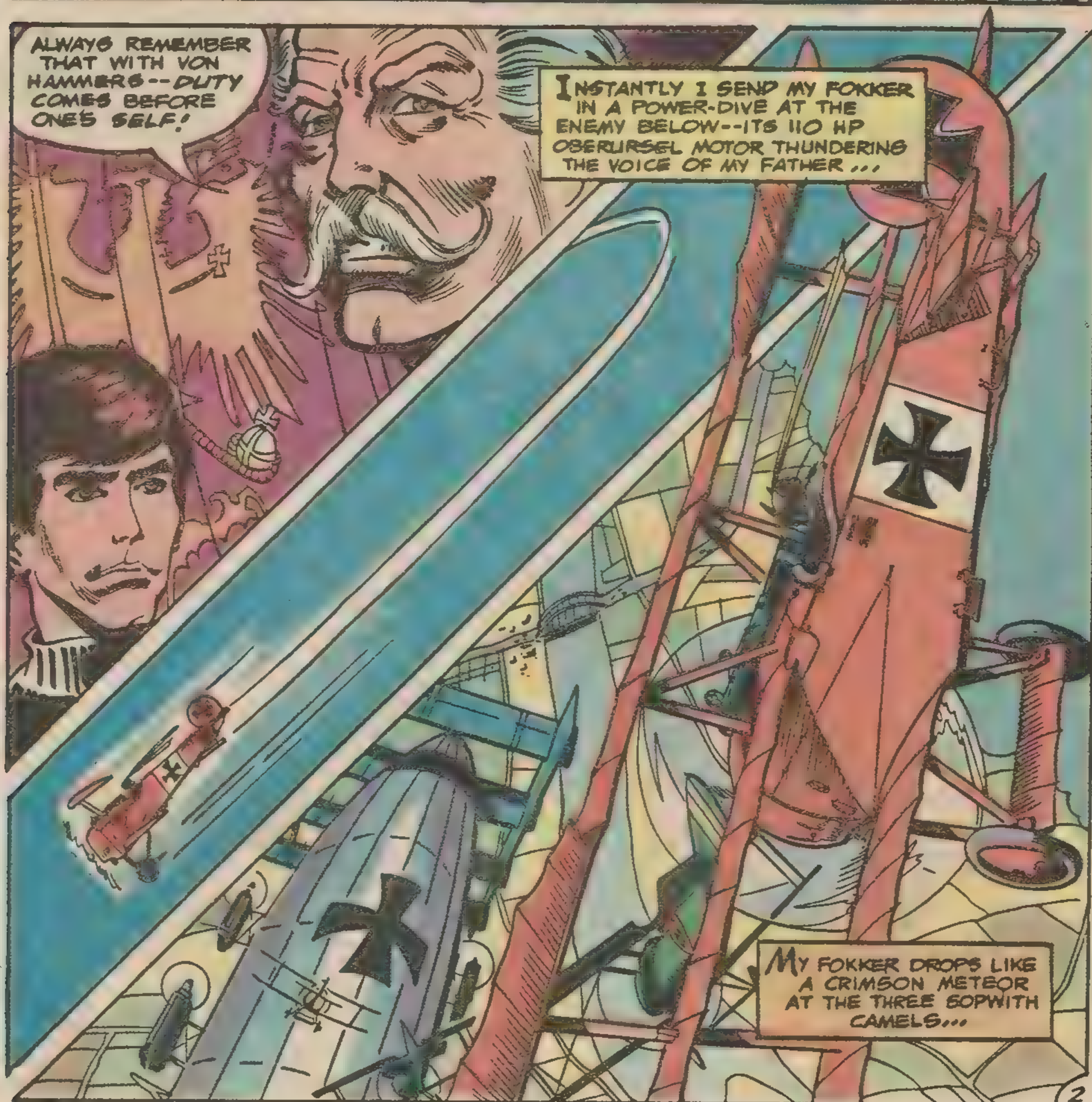
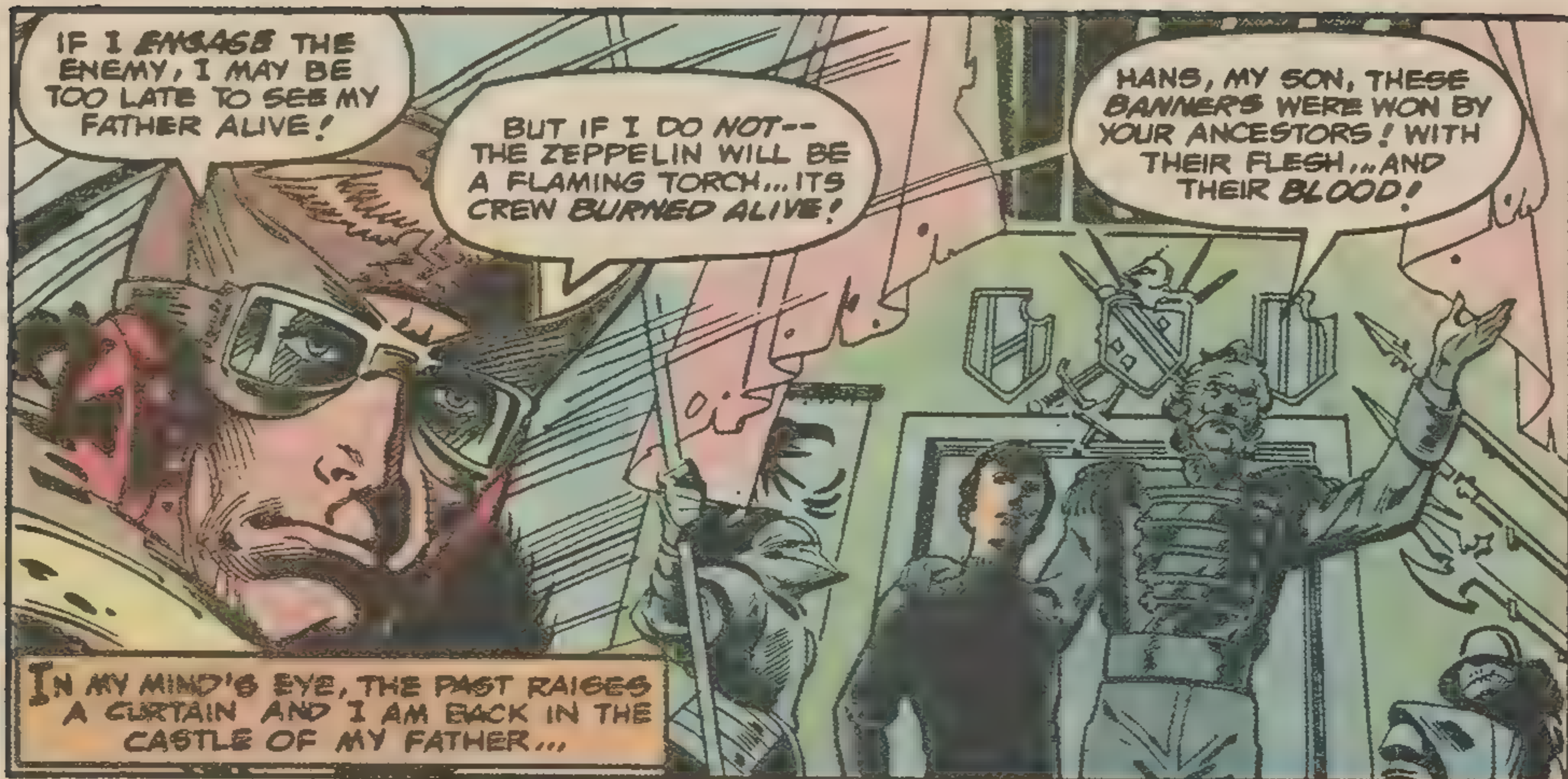
ENEMY ACE

IN SILENT SKY... SCREAMING DEATH!!

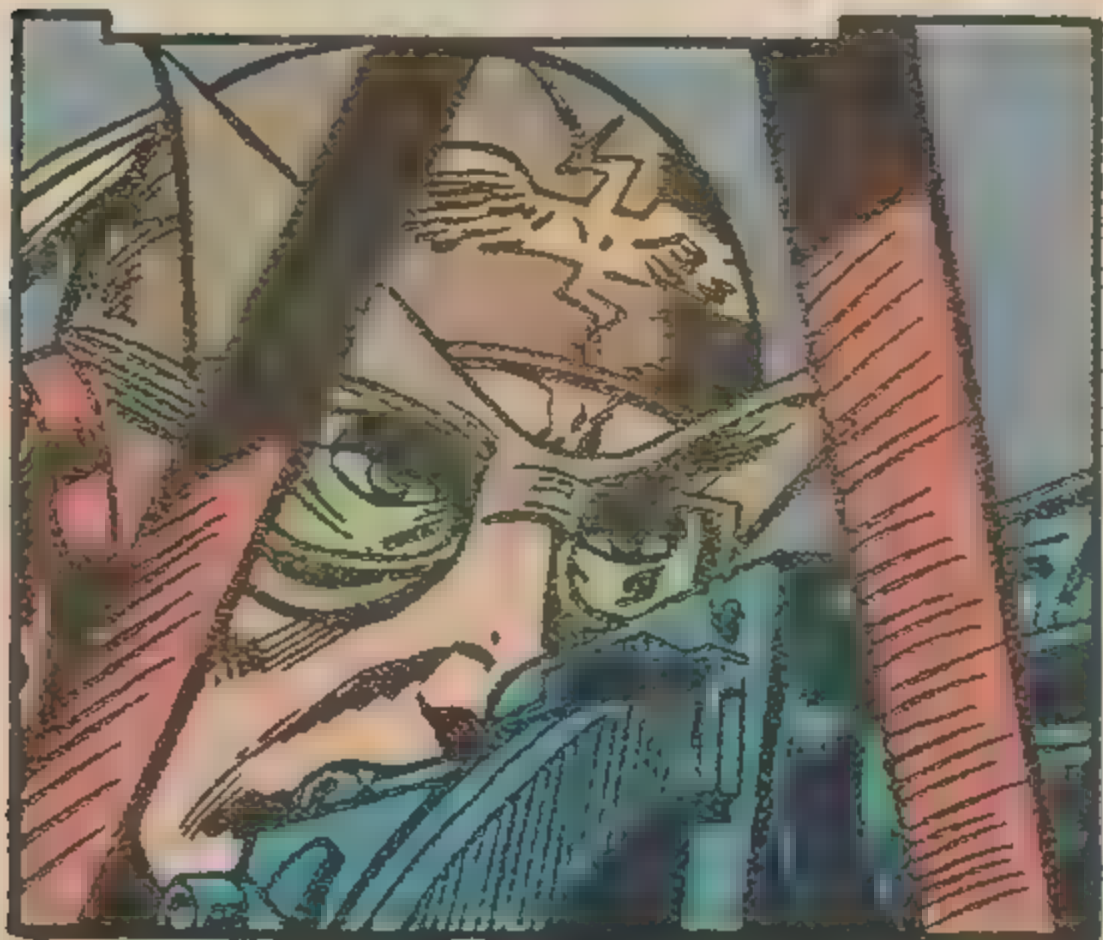
SUDDENLY, THE CLOUDS PART BEFORE THE SPINNING PROPELLER OF MY RED TRIPLANE. BELOW ME IS A FROZEN TABLEAU OF FAMILIAR TERROR...

THREE BRITISH SOPWITH CAMELS ATTACKING ONE OF OUR ZEPPELINS!

CREATED & WRITTEN BY
BOB KANIGHER
PENCILS - LARRY HAMA
INKS - BOB SMITH
LETTERS - MILT SNAPINN
COLORS - JERRY SERPE
EDITOR - PAUL LEVITZ



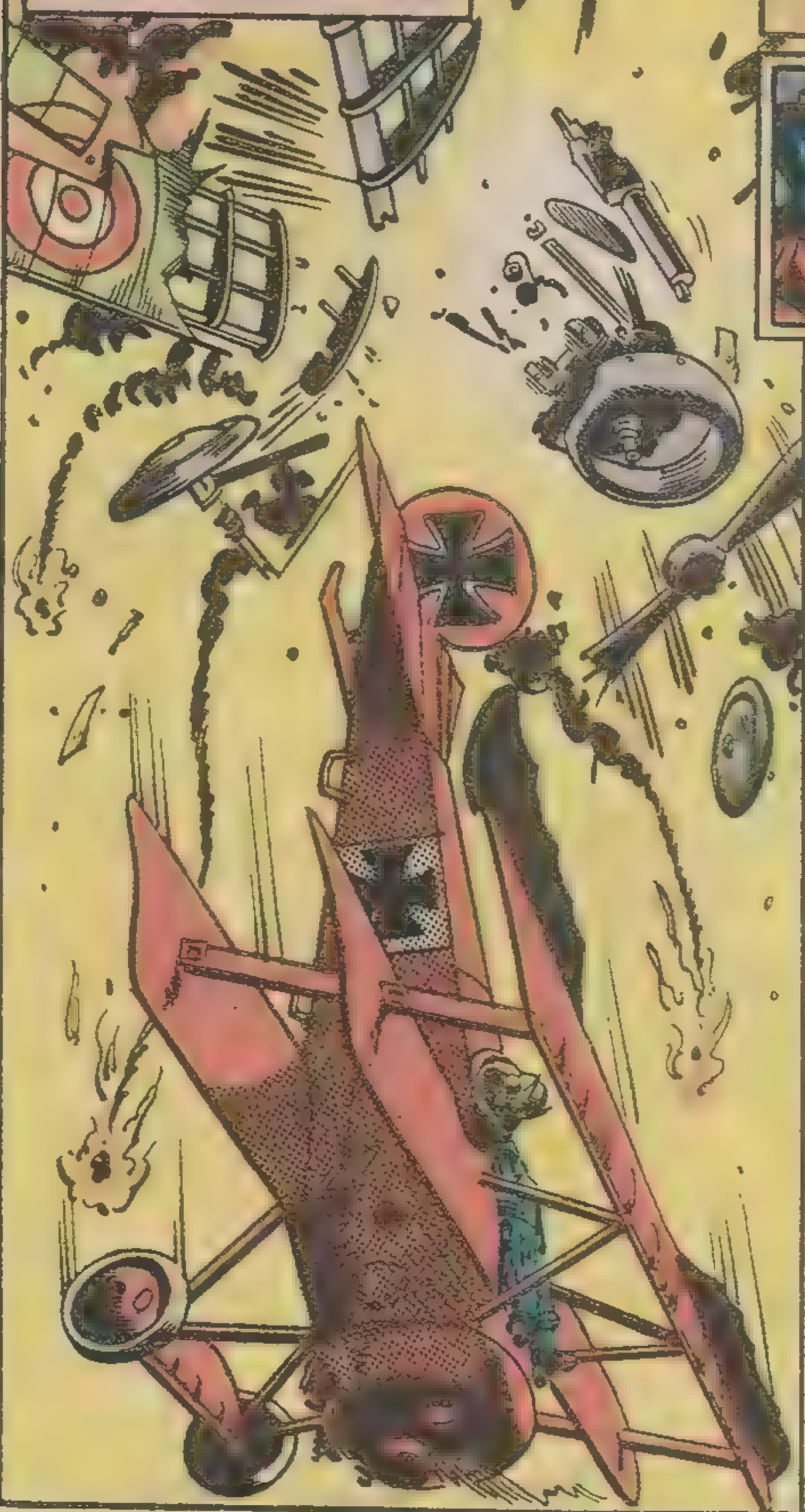
THE EAGER ENEMY IS
UNAWARE THAT I
HAVE JOINED THEIR
DIVE OF DEATH!



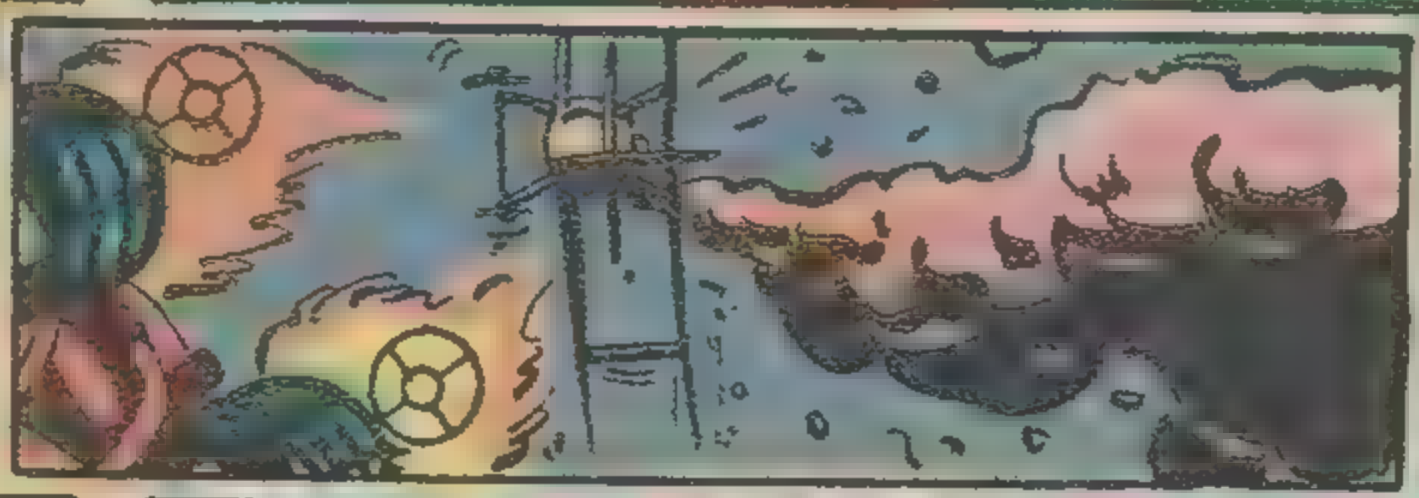
MY TWIN SPANDALS
RAGE !!!



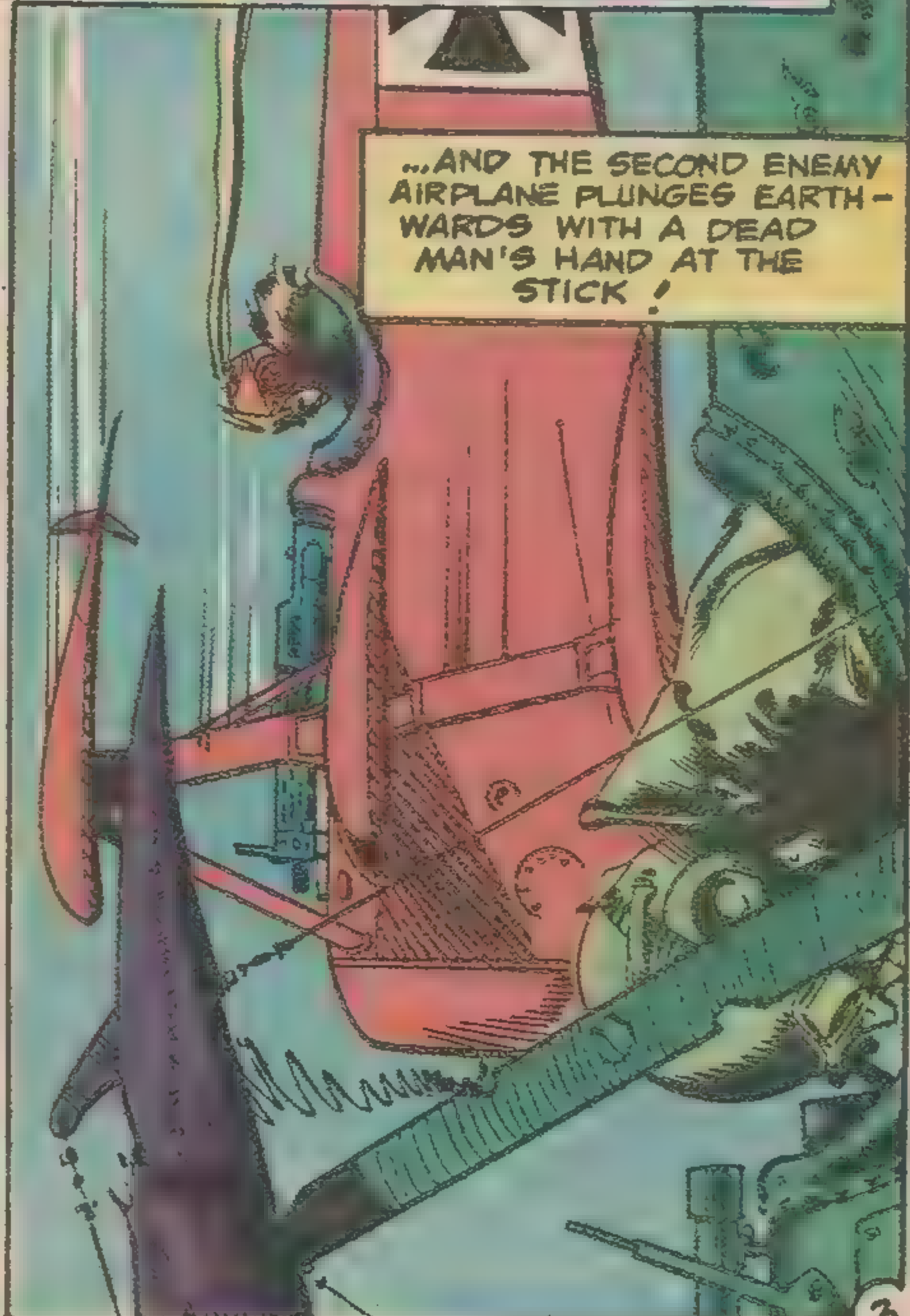
THE REAR SOPWITH
CAMEL DISINTEGRATES
BEFORE ME AS I
HURTLE PAST IT...

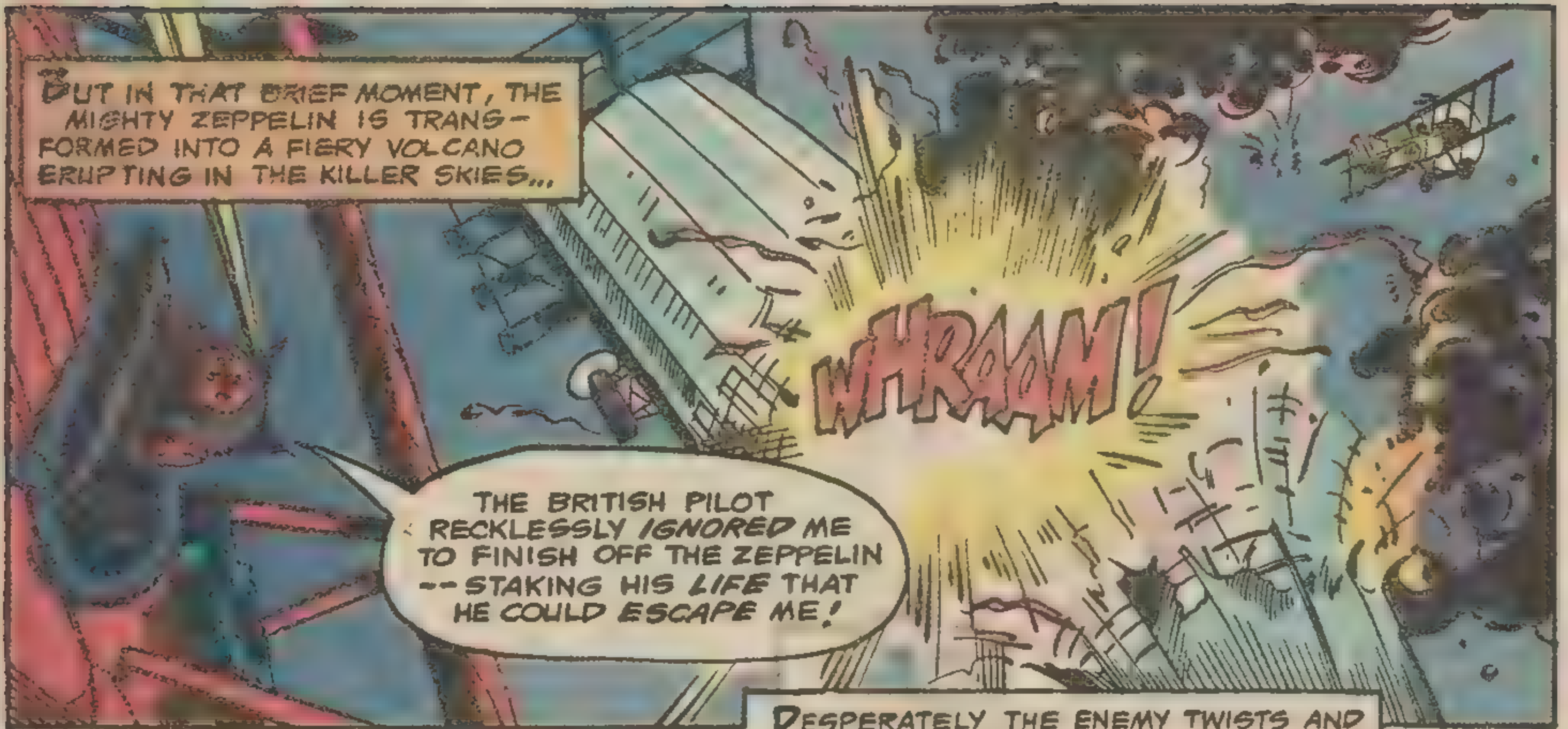


THE MUZZLES OF MY SPANDALS FLAME
AGAIN LIKE TWIN MOUTHS OF HELL!



...AND THE SECOND ENEMY
AIRPLANE PLUNGES EARTH-
WARDS WITH A DEAD
MAN'S HAND AT THE
STICK!





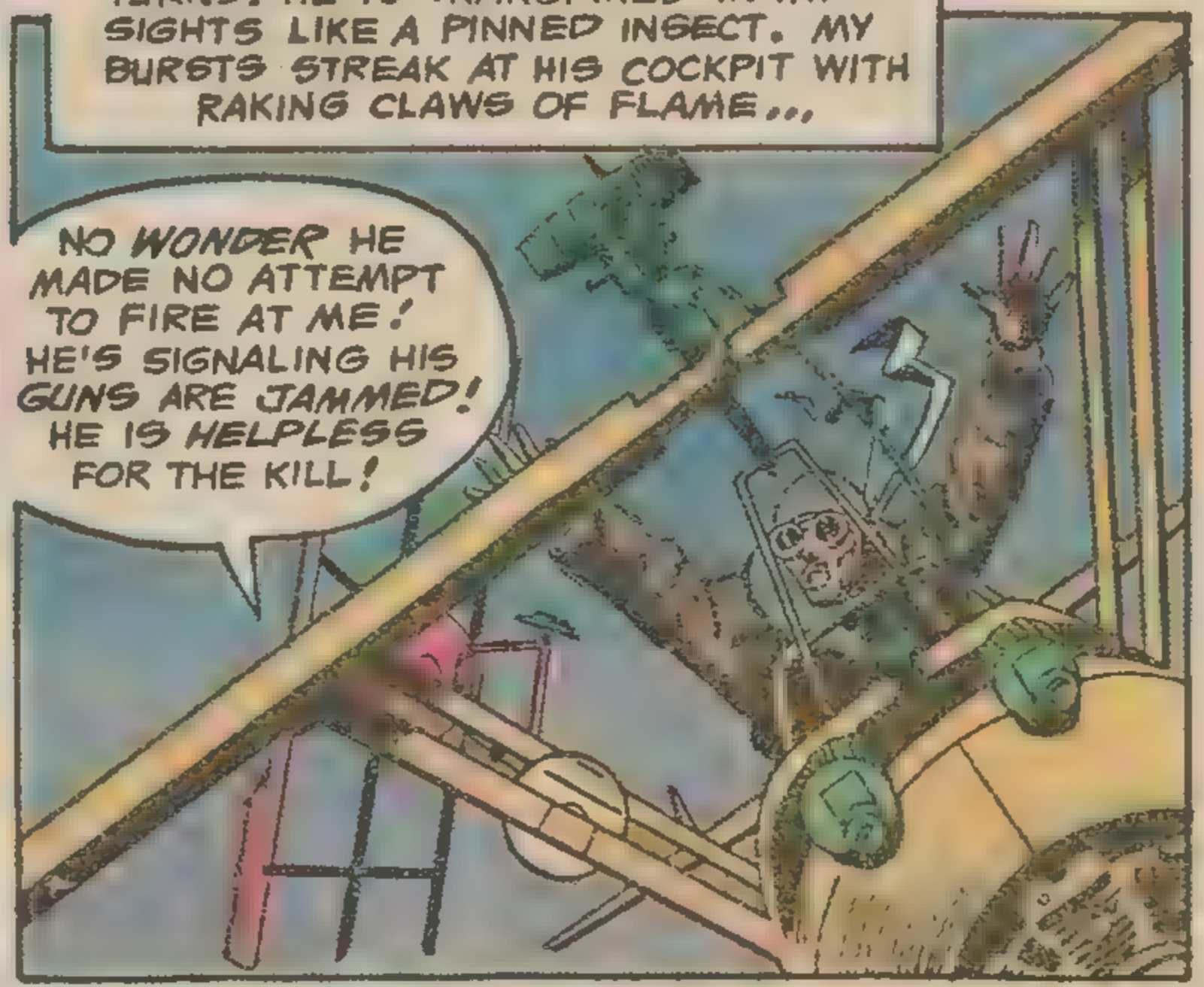
BUT IN THAT BRIEF MOMENT, THE MIGHTY ZEPPELIN IS TRANSFORMED INTO A FIERY VOLCANO ERUPTING IN THE KILLER SKIES...

THE BRITISH PILOT RECKLESSLY IGNORED ME TO FINISH OFF THE ZEPPELIN -- STAKING HIS LIFE THAT HE COULD ESCAPE ME!

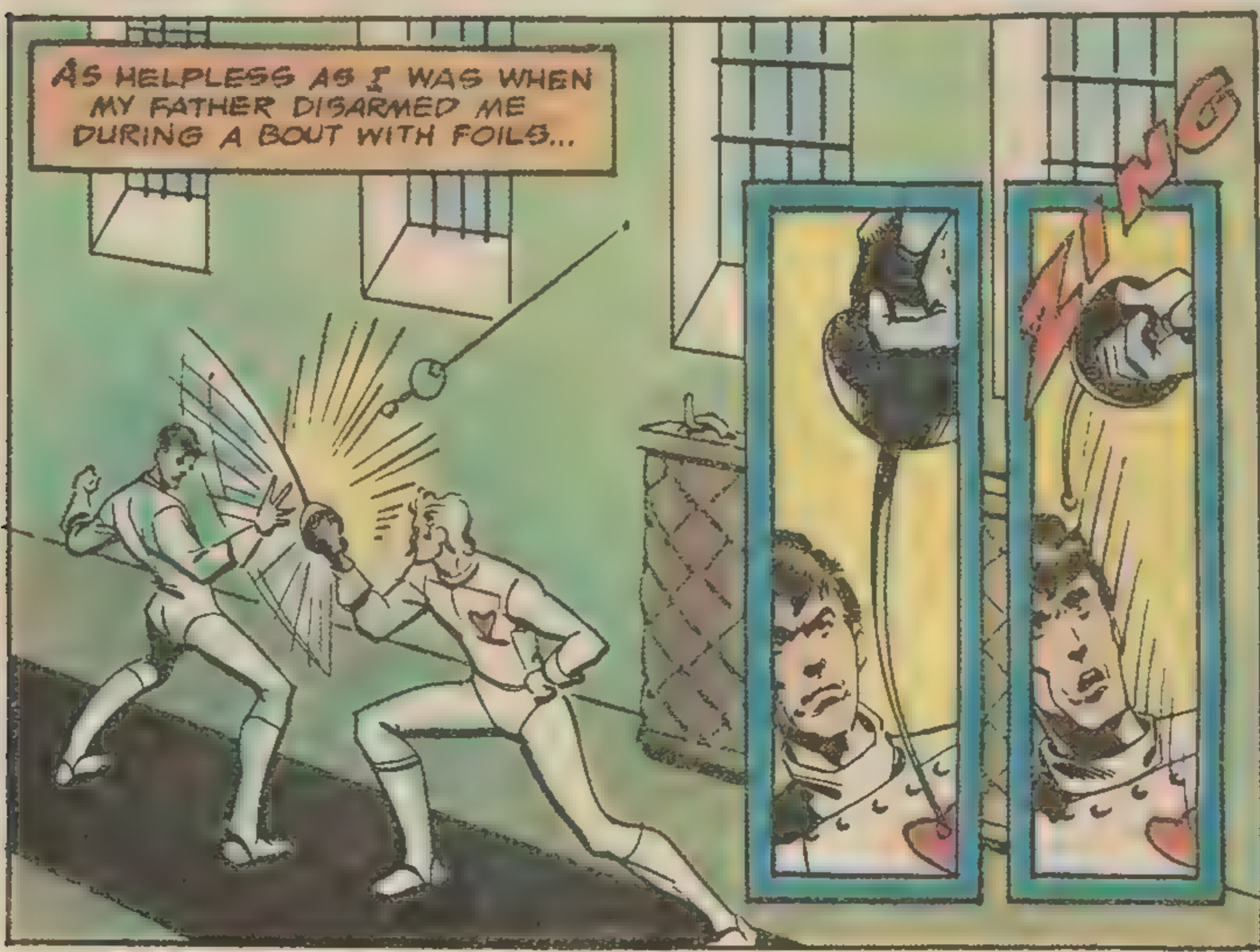
DESPERATELY THE ENEMY TWISTS AND TURNS. HE IS TRANSFIXED IN MY SIGHTS LIKE A PINNED INSECT. MY BURSTS STREAK AT HIS COCKPIT WITH RAKING CLAWS OF FLAME...



HE IS A GALLANT PILOT-- BUT HE LOST! I AM IN THE KILL POSITION! NOTHING CAN SAVE HIM NOW!



NO WONDER HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO FIRE AT ME! HE'S SIGNALING HIS GUNS ARE JAMMED! HE IS HELPLESS FOR THE KILL!



AS HELPLESS AS I WAS WHEN MY FATHER DISARMED ME DURING A BOUT WITH FOILS...



HANS, MY SON! WHEN MEN IGNORE THE RULES OF WARFARE, AND KILL THE HELPLESS LIKE ANIMALS -- THEY THEMSELVES BECOME ANIMALS!

STRONG ARMS

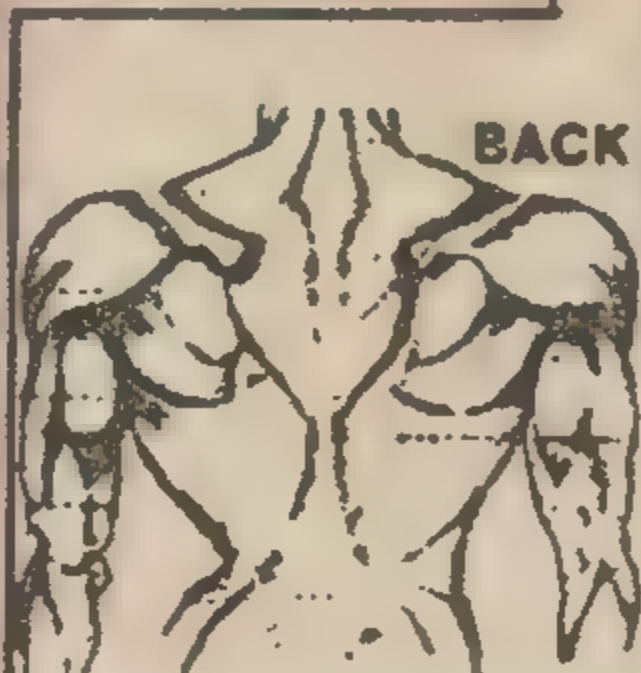
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HELPLESS...

...YOU ARE
FREE
TO GO!

IT IS SELDOM A VICTIM
ESCAPES THE KILLER SKIES!

I PRAY THIS DELAY
WILL NOT PREVENT
ME FROM REACHING
MY FATHER WHILE
HE IS STILL ALIVE!

AUTOMATICALLY, I SWIVEL
MY GAZE TO CHECK THE
SKIES FOR ANY ENEMY...

ONE OF OUR
ALBATROSS D-359
ATTACKING THE
UNARMED BRITISH
PILOT!

BUT--BEFORE I CAN GET BETWEEN THE CALLOUS ALBATROSS
PILOT AND HIS HELPLESS PREY...

I YANK MY STICK
TO MY BELT AND
WRENCH MY FOKKER
AROUND IN A
ROARING LOOP...

I AM
TOO LATE!

THE ENGLANDER
IS ABLAZE!

THE BRITISH PILOT CLIMBS OUT OF HIS SMOKING COCKPIT...ACROSS THE NARROW SPACE SEPARATING US...THE BURNING EYES HE FIXES ON ME ARE MORE FIERY THAN THE FLAMES CONSUMING HIS SHIP...

HE LEAPS FROM THE HOLO-CAUST... FALLING LIKE A BURNING LEAF... TOWARDS THE MERCILESS EARTH... 10,000 FEET BELOW...

IT WAS MURDER!

THE ALBATROSS PILOT STARES BEHIND HIM AT MY CRIMSON FOKKER PLUMMETING AT HIM IN THE KILL POSITION...

HE DIVES IN TERROR FROM MY SLASHING BLADES... BUT HE CAN NO MORE ESCAPE ME THAN THE KILLER SKIES...WHICH WILL SOONER OR LATER CRUSH ALL WHO BATTLE IN THEM!

END OF PART ONE!!

PART 2 CONTINUES IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *MEN OF WAR!*



Publishorial

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You're walking up to the newsstand, your hard-earned dollars clutched tightly in hand. You know exactly what you want, because this is the week when five of your favorite comics are due out, and you'll die if you have to miss even **one** of them. But as you get closer to the creaking old spinner rack, you feel your nerves tingle, your lungs pull in an extra gulp of air, and you see it... that **sixth** comic that you've just gotta have, a sensational summer special featuring the one hero who means the most to you. But there just aren't enough dollars in your wallet to go around.

Congratulations, friend. You just caught a case of the summer surprise blues.

Actually, that happens to most devoted comics fans every year around this time. It's a long-standing tradition of the comics industry to get all our best people and projects in time for the summer, and that means even the most devoted reader of **Direct Currents**, our letter columns, and the fan press couldn't be sure of everything that's about to happen. So you go to the newsstand and get the inevitable summer surprise blues.

But not this year. At least not here at DC. It's not enough that we've produced the most extraordinary specials, spectaculars and tabloid editions for this summer. We want you to know about them far enough in advance to budget your comics dollar, so all the surprises at your newsstand are pleasant ones.

The summer starts early this year, with the sequel to last summer's most talked about comic. **THE ORIGINAL SWAMP THING SAGA** will continue the Len Wein-Berni Wrightson classic by presenting Books 3 and 4, with a wonderful new wrap-around cover poster by Berni Wrightson. This volume brings the man-monster face to face with two of his most fearsome foes: The Patchwork Man and the weirdest werewolf in comics history. After that, for those of you who want a more relaxing in-

terlude, we'll follow up with a tabloid edition of **RUDOLPH'S SUMMER FUN**, exploring the extraordinary adventures of Santa's favorite reindeer during his time off.

June's the target month for The DC Explosion, and I'll tell you all about that next month. But besides redesigning our whole line to make it more dynamic than ever before, we're also publishing the collector's item you've been clamoring for since we began our **FAMOUS FIRST EDITION** series four years ago: **SUPERMAN #1**, the perfect capstone to celebrate the Kryptonian's fortieth anniversary year. This tabloid edition combines the best of the old with the best of the new, because it's beautifully gift-wrapped in a Neal Adams cover that depicts the Man of Steel as he was, as he is, and as he will be in the future.

There's no slowdown for the rest of the summer, either. **SHOWCASE** will be featuring three single-issue features, as we focus the spotlight on characters from our various Dollar Comics. **The O.S.S.—Spies At War** leads off in the June release, followed by **Deadman** in July, and **The Creeper** in August. I wish I had the space to convey the excitement in the stories that Robert Kanigher, Len Wein, Gerry Conway and Steve Ditko have crafted for these issues, or the compelling imagery in the art by Ric Estrada, Bill Draut, Jim Aparo and Steve Ditko. But I can't, because that's not all we have up our sleeve.

Two more tabloid editions follow in August, featuring a new super-length story of **THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA** by Gerry Conway and Rich Buckler, and the second classic collection of **THE BEST OF DC**. And our **SPECTACULAR** line marches on with **BATMAN** in a three-in-one thriller, featuring a unique illustrated novelette by Denny O'Neill and Marshall Rogers, and then an all-star western anthology starring, of course, **JONAH HEX** (but it also features the first **Bat Lash** solo in ten years, and that's reason enough to buy an extra copy).

Consider yourself prepared. You've never seen a summer like this one before. We're ready with our best, and I hope you'll be a part of all the excitement.

Take care—

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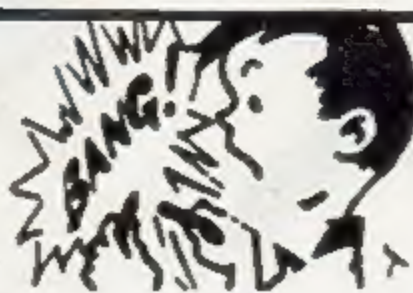
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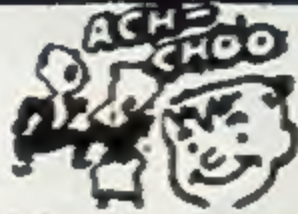
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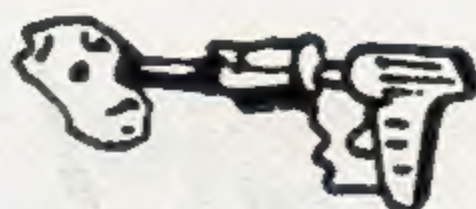
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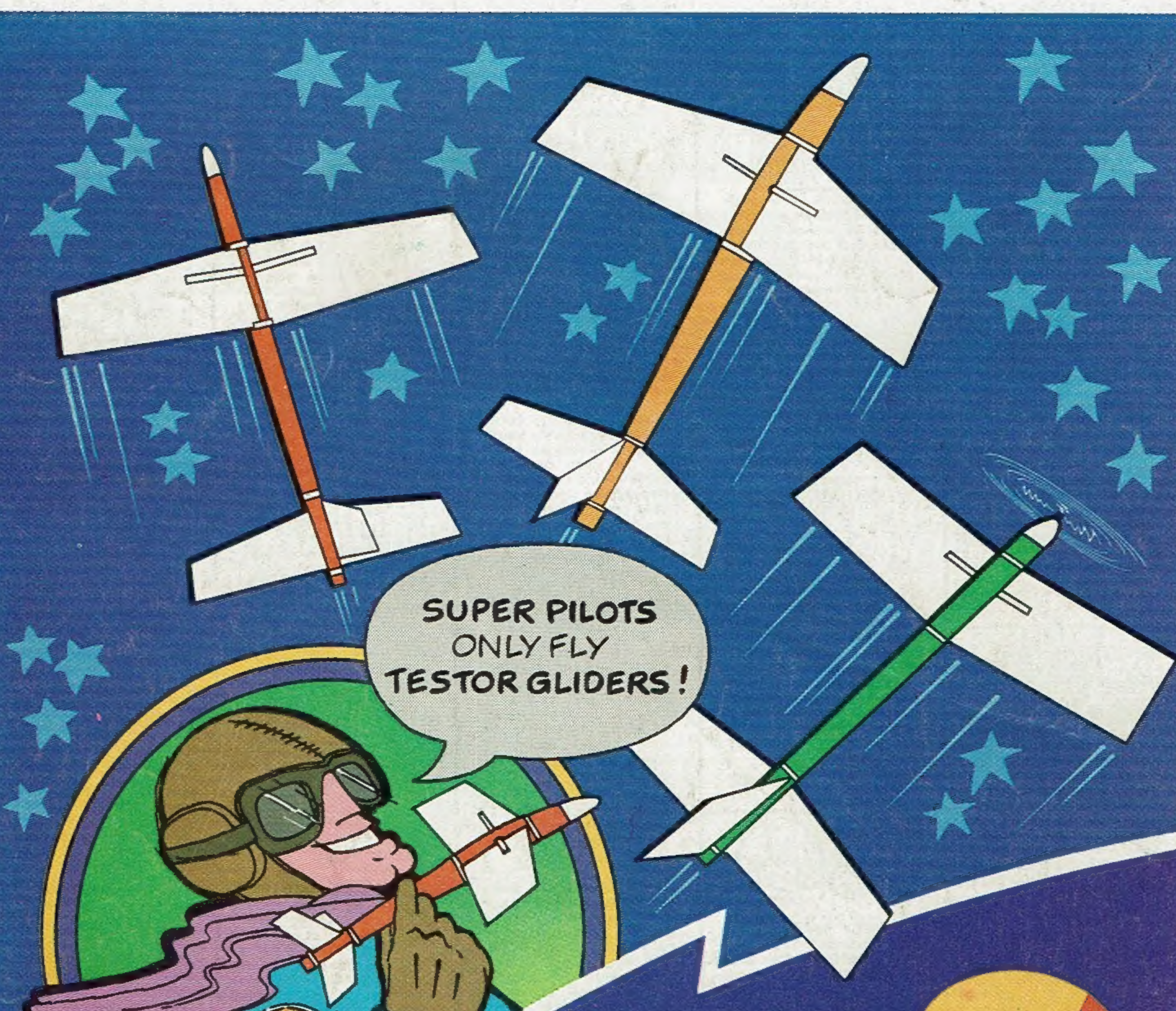
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